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**MATHEMATICA**  
Policy Research, Inc.

**HUNGER IN AMERICA  
2006  
Local Report Prepared for  
The Food Bank of the Rio  
Grande Valley (4412)**

*Final Report*

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Submitted to:

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Dear Friends:

It is with great honor that I present to you the most comprehensive study of domestic hunger ever undertaken, *Hunger in America 2006*. The release of this study comes on the heels of the most catastrophic hurricane seasons Americans have ever witnessed. We have all seen the devastation Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma had on the landscape of the American Gulf as well as our beloved towns and cities. Tragically, as the murky waters began to recede, the faces of poverty and hunger in our country began to emerge.

The aftermath of these brutal storms revealed to the entire nation the hidden crisis of Americans living in poverty. Many of us asked ourselves, “In the land of plenty, how can this be?” Yet, our eyes are not the only ones reopened. Newspapers across the globe pondered the very same question, shocked at the very same images of desperate Americans that could easily have been mistaken for communities of the Third World.

While the face of poverty was partially hidden, so was the enormous generosity and spirit of the American people to join together in a common purpose to help those who are suffering. This unprecedented outpouring of support was demonstrated in record levels of donations to non-profits involved in the disaster-relief efforts; schoolchildren collecting canned goods to send to the impact zone; households taking in distraught families when they had nowhere else to turn; and doctors and other medical professionals working around the clock to provide the medical care needed when there was no hospital left. These few examples illustrate that the moral will to end human suffering, including hunger, is within all Americans.

What you hold in your hands is the most extensive and ambitious study of hunger in America to date. *Hunger in America 2006* involved more than 52,000 face-to-face interviews with clients who sought emergency help through our network of more than 200 food banks and their member agencies. Additionally, more than 30,000 of these member agencies across the country responded to our questionnaire as well.

The numbers contained in this report reflect the stories of thousands of Americans living through disasters everyday, and not just after a hurricane. For these Americans, disaster occurs when faced with the difficult choices of being forced to choose between feeding your family and paying the rent, between filling a prescription and eating dinner, or between providing a warm home for their children and buying groceries.

The struggle to end hunger so that no family has to make these difficult choices confronts this nation. Like the receding of the flood waters, the pages within this report reveal a hidden America that some may have never known existed until now. *Hunger in America* is not just the

homeless: it impacts our nation's cities and small towns, our wealthy suburbs and our poorest rural counties. Hunger impacts families with jobs and the elderly with medical needs. This study supports the notion that hunger in America does not discriminate.

I extend my deepest thanks to the many America's Second Harvest Network members that participated in this study. The road to this report's publication has been tireless, and the effort our Network has shown towards *Hunger in America 2006* reflects our shared belief in the significance of the data included. In addition, I would also like to thank the thousands of agencies that allowed data collectors to come into their operation to conduct interviews, as well as the time put towards answering detailed questions regarding the features of their operation.

I must also acknowledge the dedicated and conscientious work of the entire research team that made this report possible. The staff of Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. exemplified professionalism and devotion towards this very difficult project, and Dr. John Cook of the Boston University School of Medicine and Dr. Beth Osborne Daponte of Yale University and their team of respected and venerated researchers applied themselves to the task at hand as if it were their very own project.

Finally, I would like to express my grateful appreciation for the tens of thousands of Americans who had the courage to be interviewed and divulge their personal information for this endeavor. It is because of their stories that I am proud to present to you *Hunger in America 2006*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Forney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Robert H. Forney  
President and CEO

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the strong support and vision of the staff at America's Second Harvest, Doug O'Brien, Halley Aldeen, and Stephanie Uchima, who provided sound guidance and strong support throughout the research process. The quality of the product was also much improved through the participation of the Technical Advisory Group: John Cook, Beth Osborne Daponte, Steve Carlson, Kirk Johnson, Lynn Parker, Jan Poppendieck, Martha Raske, Ken Rice, Rob Santos, and Tommy Wright.

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## **1. HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS**

This report presents information on the clients and agencies served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The information is drawn from a national study, Hunger in America 2006, conducted for America's Second Harvest (A2H), the nation's largest organization of emergency food providers. The national study is based on completed in-person interviews with more than 52,000 clients served by the A2H food bank network, as well as on completed questionnaires from more than 30,000 A2H agencies. The study summarized below focuses mainly on emergency food providers and their clients who are supplied with food by food banks in the A2H network. Here, emergency food providers are defined to include food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters serving short-term residents. It should be recognized that many other types of provider organizations served by food banks are, for the most part, *not* described in this study. These providers who are not covered included such services as Congregate Meals for seniors, day care facilities, and after school programs.

Key findings are summarized below:

### **HOW MANY CLIENTS RECEIVE EMERGENCY FOOD FROM THE FOOD BANK OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY?**

- The A2H system served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley provides food for an estimated 172,300 different people annually.
- Approximately 96,300 different people receive assistance in any given week.

### **WHO RECEIVES EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE?**

A2H agencies served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley provide food for a broad cross-section of households. Key characteristics include:

- 24% of the members of households served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley are children under 18 years old (Table 5.3.2).
- 7% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years (Table 5.3.2).
- 33% of the members of households are elderly (Table 5.3.2).
- About 18% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 0% are non-Hispanic black, 81% are Hispanic, and the rest are from other racial or ethnic groups (Table 5.6.1).
- 31% of households include at least one employed adult (Table 5.7.1).
- 74% have incomes below the official federal poverty level (Table 5.8.2.1) during the previous month.
- 4% are homeless (Table 5.9.1.1).

### **MANY A2H CLIENTS ARE FOOD INSECURE OR ARE EXPERIENCING HUNGER**

- Among all client households served by emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, 31% are food insecure, according to the U.S. government's official food security scale. This includes client households who are food insecure without hunger and those who are food insecure with hunger (Table 6.1.1).
- 9% of the clients are experiencing hunger (Table 6.1.1).
- Among households with children, 73% are food insecure and 18% are experiencing hunger (Table 6.1.1).

### **MANY CLIENTS REPORT HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES**

- 20% of clients served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel (Table 6.5.1).
- 17% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage (Table 6.5.1).
- 19% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care (Table 6.5.1).

**DO A2H CLIENTS ALSO RECEIVE FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT?**

- 15% of client households served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley are receiving Food Stamp Program benefits (Table 7.1.1); however, it is likely that many more are eligible (Table 7.2.1).
- Among households with preschool children, 75% participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (Table 7.4.1).
- Among households with school-age children, 73% and 77%, respectively, participate in the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs (Table 7.4.1).

**MANY A2H CLIENTS ARE IN POOR HEALTH**

- 17% of households served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley report having at least one household member in poor health (Table 8.1.1)

**MOST CLIENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES THEY RECEIVE FROM THE AGENCIES OF THE FOOD BANK OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY**

- 94% of adult clients said they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the amount of food they received from their A2H provider; 97% were satisfied with the quality of the food they received (Table 9.2.1).

**HOW LARGE IS THE FOOD BANK OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY?**

- The Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley included approximately 315 agencies at the administration of this survey, of which 232 have responded to the agency survey. Of the responding agencies, 200 had at least one food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter.

**WHAT KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS OPERATE EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS OF THE FOOD BANK OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY?**

- 73% of pantries, 48% of kitchens, and 50% of shelters are run by faith-based agencies affiliated with churches, mosques, synagogues, and other religious organizations (Table 10.6.1).
- At the agency level, 70% of agencies with at least one pantry, kitchen, or shelter and 64% of all agencies including those only with other types of programs are faith-based (Table 10.6.1).

- Private nonprofit organizations with no religious affiliation make up a large share of other types of agencies (Table 10.6.1).

### **HAVE AGENCIES BEEN EXPERIENCING CHANGES IN THE NEED FOR THEIR SERVICES?**

- 68% of pantries, 76% of kitchens, and 82% of shelters of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley reported that there had been an increase since 2001 in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites (Table 10.8.1).

### **WHERE DO THESE AGENCIES OBTAIN THEIR FOOD?**

- Food banks are by far the single most important source of food for the agencies, accounting for 92% of the food used by pantries, 61% of kitchens' food, and 59% of shelters' food (Table 13.1.1).
- Other important sources of food include religious organizations, government, and direct purchases from wholesalers and retailers (Table 13.1.1).
- 91% of pantries, 81% of kitchens, and 82% of shelters of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley receive food from government commodity programs (Table 13.1.1).

### **VOLUNTEERS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN THE A2H NETWORK**

- For the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, 92% of pantries, 95% of kitchens, and 70% of shelters use volunteers (Table 13.2.1).
- Many programs rely *entirely* on volunteers; 70% of pantry programs and 19% of kitchens have no paid staff at all (Table 13.2.1).



## 2. INTRODUCTION

Recent government data indicate that at least 13.5 million households in the United States (11.9% of all households) were food insecure in 2004, of which 4.4 million (3.9% of all U.S. households) had experienced hunger at some point in that year. The food insecure households contained an estimated 38 million people, of whom almost 14 million were children. The existence of large numbers of people without secure access to adequate nutritious food represents a serious national concern.<sup>1</sup>

An important response to this problem has been the growth of private-sector institutions that have been created to provide food for the needy. In particular, throughout the United States, food pantries, emergency kitchens, and homeless shelters play a critical role in meeting the nutritional needs of America's low-income population. By providing people who need assistance with food for home preparation (pantries) and with prepared food that can be eaten at the agencies (kitchens and shelters), these organizations help meet the needs of people and households that otherwise, in many instances, would lack sufficient food.

America's Second Harvest (A2H) plays a critical role in helping these organizations accomplish their mission. A2H, a network of about 80% of all food banks in this country, supports the emergency food system by obtaining food for the system from national organizations, such as major food companies, and providing technical assistance and other

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Nord, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson. "Household Food Security in the United States, 2003." U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2004. Economic Research Report No. 11 (ERS-11) October 2005.

services to the food banks and food rescue organizations. A2H also represents the interests of the emergency food community in the national political process.

Over the years, A2H has periodically studied the workings of its network and the characteristics of the clients the network serves, both to assess the severity of nutrition-related problems of the poor in America and to identify ways of increasing the effectiveness of its operations. This report presents the results of the fourth comprehensive study sponsored by A2H. The study provides detailed information about the programs and agencies that operate under A2H network members and the clients the programs serve.

This chapter of the report provides important background for the findings. Subsequent subsections are as follows:

- Highlight the objectives of the study
- Provide an overview of the Second Harvest Network
- Identify the groups of organizations involved in conducting the study
- Provide an overview of the rest of the report

## **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

The Hunger in America 2006 study comprises a national survey of A2H emergency food providers and their clients. The study had the following primary objectives:

- To describe the national demographic characteristics, income levels, food stamp utilization, food security status, and service needs of low-income clients who access emergency food assistance from the A2H network at the national level
- To describe the demographic profiles of clients of local agencies and to examine the ability of local agencies to meet the food security needs of their clients
- To compare data, where possible, between the 2001 and 2005 A2H research studies, to identify trends in emergency food assistance demands, and to relate observed trends to welfare policies

- To compare local-level and national-level data on the characteristics of agencies in describing the charitable response to hunger throughout the nation

The Hunger in America 2006 study was designed to provide a comprehensive profile of the extent and nature of hunger and food insecurity as experienced by people who access A2H's national network of charitable feeding agencies. Information was collected on clients' sociodemographic characteristics, including income and employment, benefits from food stamp and other federal or private programs, frequency of visits to emergency feeding sites, and satisfaction with local access to emergency food assistance. Information obtained from provider agencies included size of programs, services provided, sources of food, and adequacy of food supplies.

## **2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE SECOND HARVEST NETWORK**

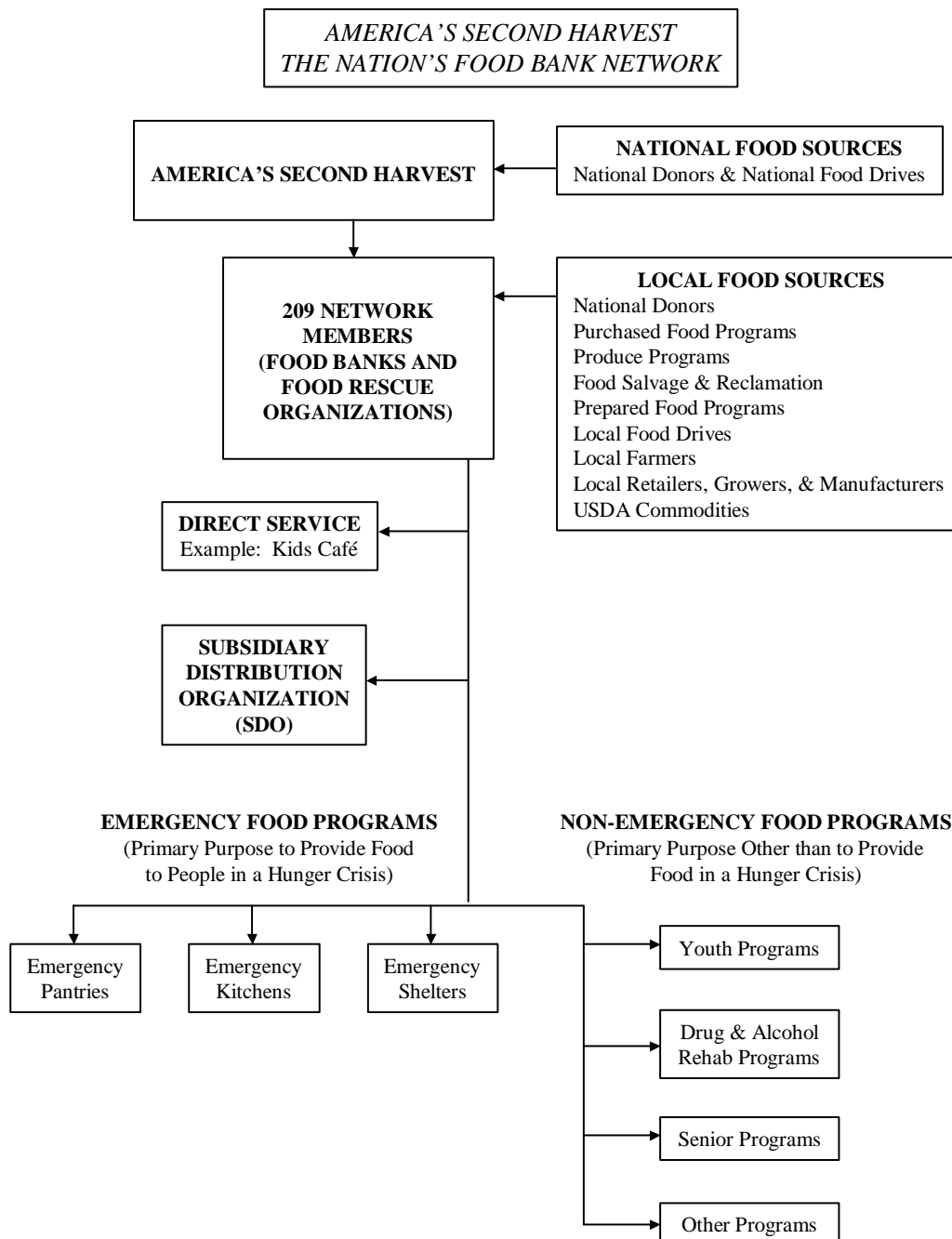
The A2H network's 209 certified members are regularly monitored by A2H staff and food industry professionals to ensure compliance with acceptable food handling, storage, and distribution standards and practices. A2H network members distribute food and grocery products to charitable organizations in their specified service areas, as shown in Chart 2.2.1.

Within this system, a number of different types of charitable organizations and programs provide food, directly or indirectly, to needy clients. However, there is no uniform use of terms identifying the essential nature of the organizations. Hunger relief organizations are usually grassroot responses to local needs. As such, they frequently differ throughout the country and use different terminology. For clarity, the terms used in this report are defined as follows:

**Food Bank.** A food bank is a charitable organization that solicits, receives, inventories, stores, and distributes donated food and grocery products to charitable agencies that directly

CHART 2.2.1

## SOURCES OF FOOD AND CHANNELS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION FOR FOOD BANKS



serve needy clients. These agencies include churches and qualifying nonprofit [Internal Revenue Code 501(c) (3)] charitable organizations.

**Subsidiary Distribution Organization (SDO).** SDOs, smaller food banks or larger agencies allied with affiliated food banks, are private, nonprofit, charitable organizations providing important community services. Although some are agencies, all SDOs distribute part of their food to other charities for direct distribution to clients.

**Food Rescue Organization (FRO).** FROs are nonprofit organizations that obtain mainly prepared and perishable food products from food service organizations, such as restaurants, hospitals, caterers, and cafeterias, and from distributors of fresh fruits and vegetables and distribute to agencies that serve clients.

**Agencies and Food Programs.** A2H network members distribute food to qualifying charitable agencies, most of which provide food directly to needy clients through food programs. Some agencies operate single-type and single-site food programs, while others operate food programs at multiple sites and sometimes operate several types of food programs.

For this research, there are two general categories of food programs that A2H network members serve: emergency and nonemergency.

Emergency food programs include food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. Their clients typically need short-term or emergency assistance.

- ***Emergency Food Pantries***, also called “Food Shelves,” distribute nonprepared foods and other grocery products to needy clients, who then prepare and use these items where they live. Food is distributed on a short-term or emergency basis until clients are able to meet their food needs. An agency that picks up boxed food from the food bank to distribute to its clients was included as a food pantry. The study excluded from this category any agency that does not directly distribute food to clients or distributes bulk food only on a basis other than emergency need (such as U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] commodities to all people over age 60).

On the other hand, a food bank distributing food directly to clients, including clients referred from another agency, qualified as a food pantry.

- ***Emergency Soup Kitchens*** provide prepared meals served at the kitchen to needy clients who do not reside on the premises. In some instances, kitchens may also provide lighter meals or snacks, such as sandwiches, for clients to take with them when the kitchen is closed. This category includes “Kids Café” providers.
- ***Emergency Shelters*** provide shelter and serve one or more meals a day on a short-term basis to low-income clients in need. Shelter may be the primary or secondary purpose of the service. Examples include homeless shelters, shelters with substance abuse programs, and transitional shelters such as those for battered women. The study did not categorize as shelters residential programs that provide services to the same clients for an extended time period. Other excluded programs are mental health/retardation group homes and juvenile probation group homes.

Nonemergency organizations refer to any programs that have a primary purpose other than emergency food distribution but also distribute food. Examples include day care programs, senior congregate-feeding programs, and summer camps.

## **2.3 GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY**

The study was conceived and coordinated by the national offices of A2H. Data were collected by more than 160 A2H network members or consortia around the country. A2H’s research contractor, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), provided technical advice throughout the study and implemented the sampling and data analysis activities.

Throughout all stages of the study, oversight and advice were provided by a Technical Advisory Group convened by A2H. John Cook of Boston Medical Center Department of Pediatrics was the chair and Beth Osborne Daponte of Yale University was co-chair of the Group. Other members were Steve Carlson of the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kirk Johnson of The Heritage Foundation, Lynn Parker of the Food Research and Action Center, Janet Poppendieck of Hunter College, Martha Raske of the University of

Southern Indiana, Ken Rice of Leo J. Shapiro and Associates, Rob Santos of NuStats, and Tommy Wright of the Census Bureau.

Also, the Affiliate Advisory Group (AAG) consisting of selected members of the A2H national network, provided valuable input during the research process. AAG includes: John Krakowski of City Harvest, Jayne Wright of Food Bank of Central Louisiana, Erica Hanson of Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Michelle Pierceall of Harvesters—The Community Food Network, Ellen Stroud of San Francisco Food Bank, Marian Blanchard of God’s Pantry Food Bank, Inc., and Natasha Thompson of Food Bank of the Southern Tier.

## **2.4 OVERVIEW OF THE REST OF REPORT**

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodologies used in the study and shows the proportion of agencies that participated among all eligible agencies of the A2H national network and the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. Chapter 4 makes projections of the numbers of clients served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. Chapters 5 through 9 present detailed findings from the client survey, including information about characteristics of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley clients, their levels of need, and their experiences with the program. Chapters 10 through 14 present findings from the agency survey, including data on agency characteristics and program operations in the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley service area.





### **3. METHODS**

This study had two components: (1) an agency survey that collected information about the food programs operating in the A2H network, and (2) a client survey that would characterize the people using food pantries, emergency kitchens, and shelters and provide a better understanding of their needs. Each of the participating food banks helped MPR with the development of the sampling frame and with the data collection. MPR provided technical assistance with the implementation of the agency and client surveys.

This section provides an overview of the methods used in the survey and analysis work. (Detailed information is contained in the technical volume of the report.) We first discuss two key activities common to both surveys: (1) instrument development, and (2) the training of food bank staff on survey procedures. We then describe each of the two surveys.

#### **3.1 INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT**

The 2005 data collection instruments were based on the questionnaires used in the 2001 study, revised to reflect the 2001 data collection experience and the needs of A2H. MPR worked closely with A2H and the Technical Advisory Group to revise the questionnaires to provide high-quality data.

#### **3.2 TRAINING**

To ensure that each food bank study coordinator had the proper knowledge to administer the surveys, MPR conducted three regional, two-day, in-depth training sessions. Most of the training dealt with showing the study coordinators how to prepare local interviewers to conduct the client survey. Each study coordinator also received a training video demonstrating the client

interview process and a manual containing sample materials and an outline of the A2H network members' responsibilities.

### **3.3 AGENCY SURVEY**

MPR developed the sampling frame for the agency survey by first obtaining, from participating A2H network members, lists of all active agencies each member served and then entering the names into a database. The agency survey sample consisted of a census of the agencies provided by the participating members.

After entering the data, MPR staff printed bar-coded mailing labels to identify the agencies and their addresses and then shipped the proper number of questionnaires, bar-coded labels, and mailing envelopes to each participating member. Some members mailed advance letters informing agencies of the planned survey. Study coordinators were instructed, at the training and in the manual, how to assemble and mail the questionnaires. Each envelope included a personalized cover letter.

The cover letter and the instructions on the questionnaire stated that the agency should complete the questionnaire and mail it back to MPR. In most instances, agencies did so, but some members collected the instruments from their agencies and mailed them to MPR in bulk. When MPR received a questionnaire, staff logged it into a database by scanning the bar code on the mailing label. Each Monday morning, MPR sent an e-mail to the members listing all the questionnaires received the previous week. These e-mails served as the basis for the mailing of reminder postcards to those agencies that did not return the questionnaire within two weeks of the initial mailing, and a second mailing, this time of questionnaires, to agencies that did not return the first one within two weeks following the mailing of reminder postcards. The weekly e-mails also helped the member study coordinators schedule reminder calls to agencies that did

not return the questionnaire within three weeks after the second mailing. Occasionally, in areas where response to the mailings of questionnaires was particularly low, member coordinators completed the questionnaires with nonresponding agencies over the phone. Members were also asked to apprise MPR of agencies that no longer provided food services so that they could be identified as ineligible in the database.

After MPR received, logged into the database, and reviewed the questionnaires, they were shipped to a subcontractor for data capture and imaging. The subcontractor optically scanned all questionnaires and produced data files and CD-ROMs with images of each completed questionnaire for MPR. Chart 3.3.1 summarizes the sequence of activities of the agency survey.

CHART 3.3.1

## AGENCY SURVEY ACTIVITIES



### **3.4 CLIENT SURVEY**

The agency lists obtained for the agency survey sample were also used for the two-stage sampling process for the client survey. In the first stage, depending on member size (small, medium, or large as determined by A2H goal standards), 47, 63, or 78 agencies from each participating network member were sampled with probability proportional to size. Sampled agencies were limited to those with pantries, kitchens, and shelters. MPR then asked those members to provide information on each program site the sampled agencies operated:

- Days and hours of operation
- Meals served by kitchens and shelters
- Number of clients served by kitchen and shelter programs at each meal
- Number of households served by pantry programs on an average day

The second-stage sampling process used this additional information to randomly select 30, 40, or 50 program sites, depending on the size of the member, at which to conduct client interviews. Each program site was randomly assigned a preferred date and time for the interviews. The remaining eligible programs from the 47, 63, or 78 originally selected in phase one sampling were designated as replacements. Replacements were used only when an agency or program refused to participate in the client interviews or if, after conferring with the agency, members determined that they were ineligible for the study. In cases where members did not have reserve sample, a supplemental first-stage sample was drawn and additional information was requested, or an additional visit was assigned to a randomly selected program among the already sampled programs. In some instances, we discovered during the process of obtaining additional information that an agency was no longer operating or did not run a pantry, kitchen, or shelter. In such instances, we dropped the agency from the sample.

MPR prepared bar-coded labels with identification numbers for the client questionnaires. We also printed, for use by interviewers, client selection forms with which we could randomly select program participants and account for refusals and ineligible respondents during on-site data collection. We then shipped these materials and client questionnaires to members.

Member study coordinators shipped completed questionnaires and client selection forms back to MPR. MPR staff then logged each questionnaire into a database by scanning the bar-coded label on the cover page. As with the agency survey, each Monday morning MPR sent an e-mail to the members listing the agencies where client questionnaires were completed the previous week. The e-mails allowed the member study coordinators to monitor their progress in completing the client survey portion of the study.

After MPR received the questionnaires, staff logged them into the database and shipped them to the subcontractor for data capture and imaging. The subcontractor optically scanned the questionnaires and produced data files for MPR. As with the agency survey, MPR received data files and CD-ROMs with electronic images of all completed client questionnaires. Chart 3.4.1 summarizes the sequence of activities in the client survey.

CHART 3.4.1

## CLIENT SURVEY ACTIVITIES



### 3.5 RESPONSE RATES

As Chart 3.5.1 shows, of the A2H national network of 209 members, 164 individual members covering all or part of 45 states and the District of Columbia participated in the agency survey. Of those members, 156 fully participated in the client survey.

**Client Survey.** A total of 156 individual members contacted 10,076 agencies to gain access for on-site client data collection. Of those agencies, 9,874 provided detailed information about their programs and 4,593 were sampled for and participated in client data collection.

A2H network members' staff and volunteers sampled 72,399 clients at the eligible agencies; of those 1,439 were determined to be ineligible for age or other reasons. Client interviews were completed with 52,887, or 74.5%, of the eligible respondents.<sup>2</sup>

**Agency Survey.** Participating A2H network members sent out questionnaires to 43,141 eligible agencies.<sup>3</sup> MPR received completed questionnaires from 31,342, or 72.7%.

**Research Involvement of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.** Chart 3.5.2 shows an overview of the process the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley followed for this study. It also identifies the completed numbers of responses from the client interviews and the agency survey, by program type. For the service area of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, see Chart 3.5.3.

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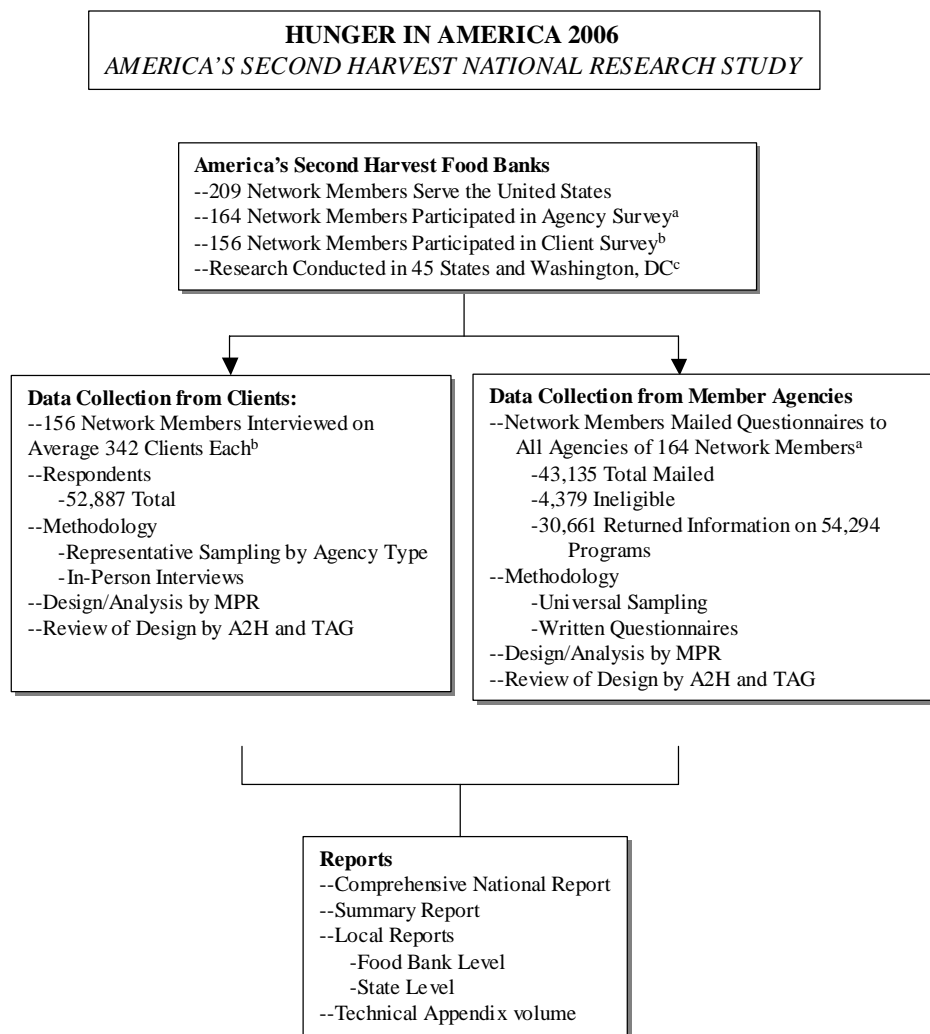
<sup>2</sup> Interviews were conducted only with respondents age 18 or older.

<sup>3</sup> Some additional questionnaires were mailed out to agencies who were later found to be no longer operating or to be otherwise ineligible.



CHART 3.5.1

## STUDY OVERVIEW



<sup>a</sup>Information from 163 Network Members reflected in the national report due to delays in data collection in some network members.

<sup>b</sup>Information from 155 Network Members reflected in the national report due to delays in data collection in some network members.

<sup>c</sup>Client survey conducted in 44 states and Washington, DC.

CHART 3.5.2

## ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

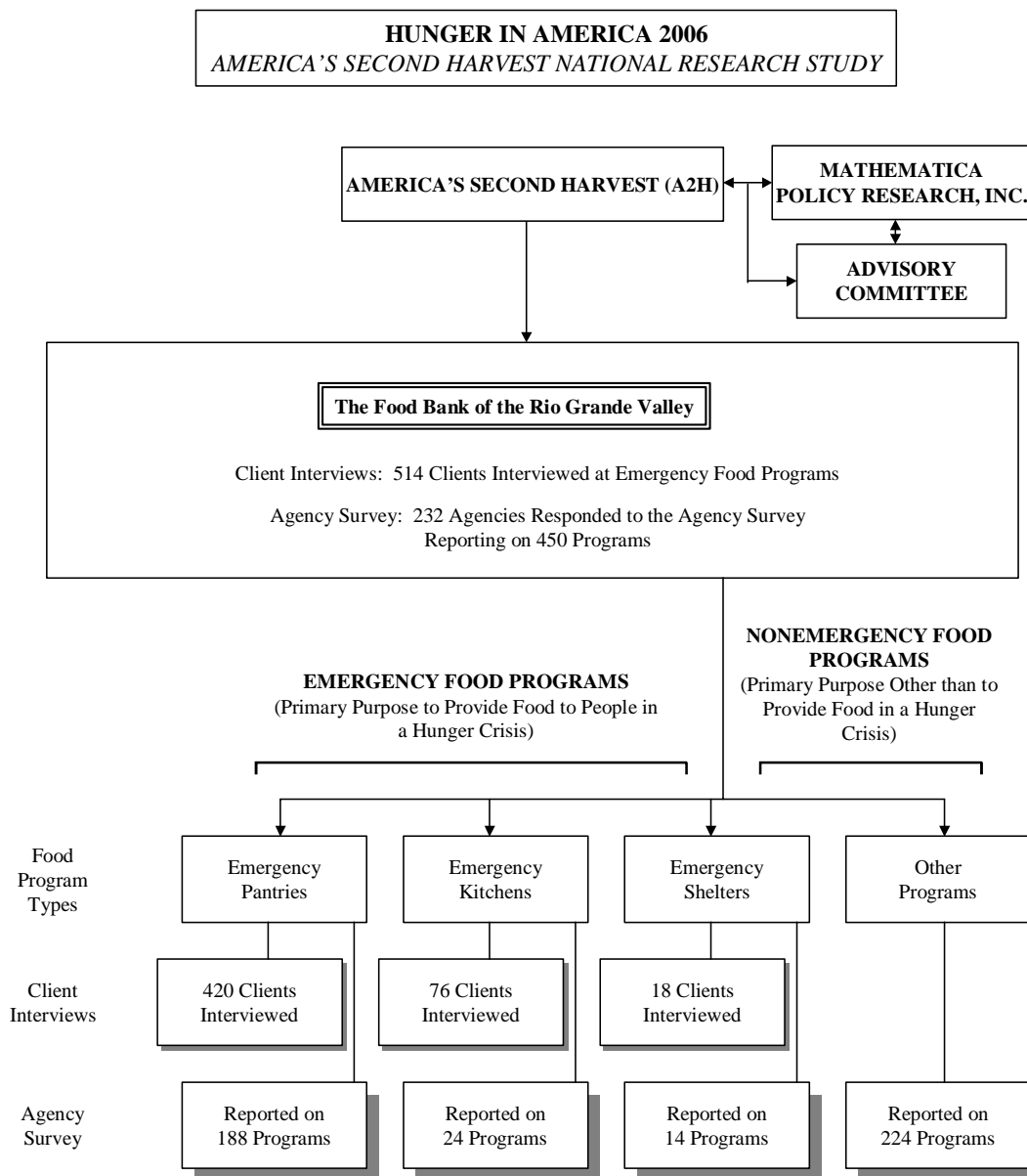
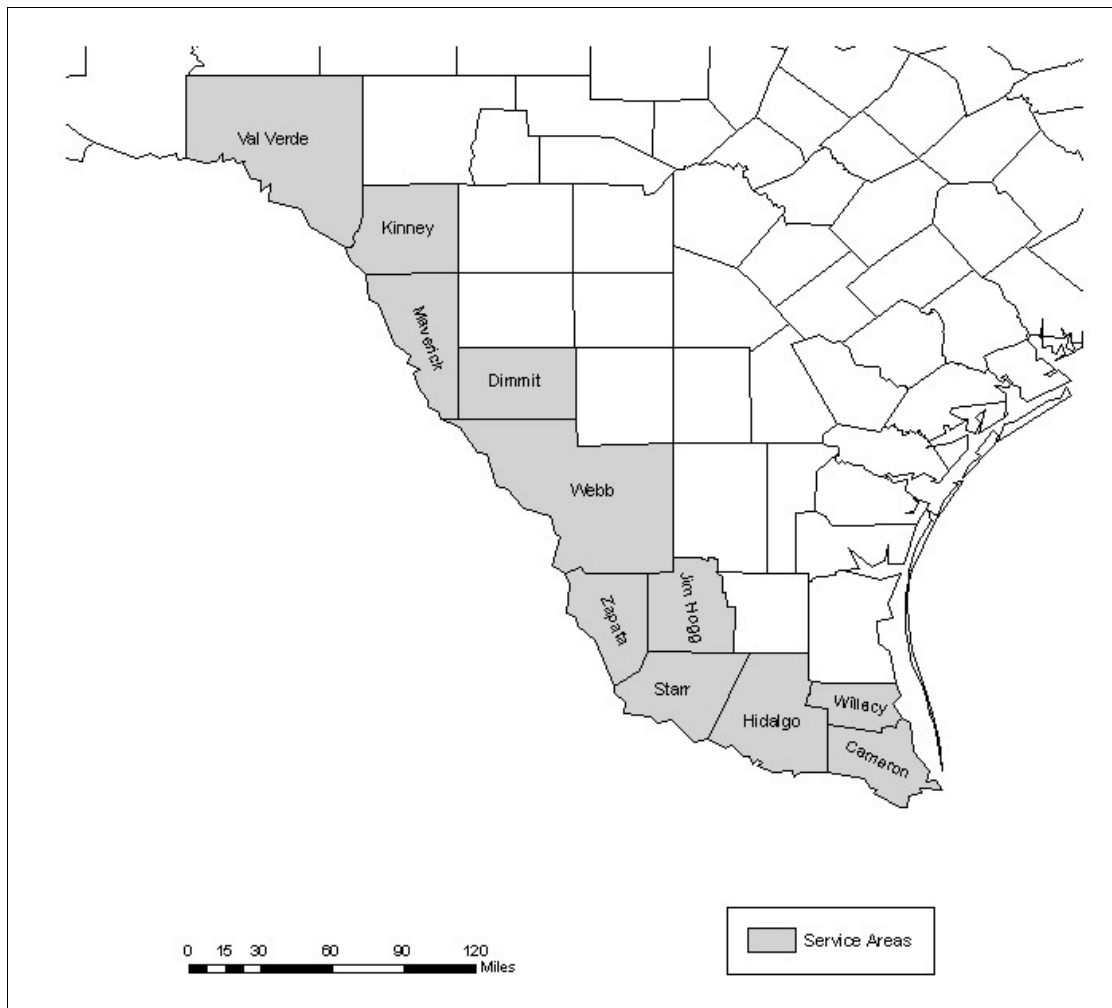


CHART 3.5.3

THE FOOD BANK OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY SERVICE AREA



### 3.6 ANALYSIS METHODS

Most of the findings presented in this report are based on tabulations of the survey data. In this section, we describe the methods used in this work.

#### 3.6.1 Tables

In the descriptive tabulations of clients presented in chapters 5 through 9, the percentage figures in the tables are based on the total weighted number of usable responses to the client survey, unless specified otherwise. Responses are weighted to represent clients or households of all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. In general, weights are based on the probabilities of selection in the sampling and also account for survey nonresponse.<sup>4</sup> Weights were scaled so that the final weights represent a month-level count of different clients, as derived in Chapter 4 of the national report.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, all tables containing information obtained from the agency survey, as presented in chapters 10 through 14, are based on the total weighted number of usable responses to the agency survey, unless specified otherwise. The descriptive tabulations in these chapters represent all emergency food programs in the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The weights, calculated based on the sampling frame, also reflect survey nonresponse.

Percentage distributions in the client tables are presented by the type of the programs where clients were interviewed (pantries, kitchens, or shelters). When appropriate, the

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<sup>4</sup> To reduce variances in the analysis, we truncated weights with extremely large values. However, to keep the sum of weights unchanged, we then adjusted the weights by an adjustment factor, which is the ratio of the sum of the original weights to the sum of the truncated weights.

<sup>5</sup> Originally, we computed weights to make the sample representative at the weekly level. We later converted them to a monthly scale to take into account the fact that, compared with kitchen and shelter users, most pantry users do not visit the program in any given week.

percentage distribution for “all clients” is shown in the last column. Most tabulations of the agency data are presented by the type of programs operated by the agencies.

The percentages in the tables are rounded to one decimal place and are based only on the valid responses. They exclude missing, don’t know, refusal, and other responses deemed incomplete for the question.

The sample sizes presented at the bottom of single-panel tables (or at the bottom of each panel of multipanel tables) reflect the total number of responses to the question. Where the question relates to a subset of the respondents, the appropriate sample size is presented. In general, these sample sizes include missing responses, as well as don’t know and refusal responses. We report the percentages of item nonresponse in notes to each table.

The main reason for including only valid responses is to present appropriately the weighted percentage distribution among the main response categories of interest. Our preliminary analysis of item nonresponse revealed little evidence of any systematic biases, and excluding missing data also has the advantage of being consistent with the convention used for previous studies commissioned by A2H.

Some tables also present the average (mean) or the median values associated with the variable of interest. The average, a measure of central tendency for continuous variables, is calculated as the sum of all valid values in a distribution, divided by the number of valid responses. The median is another measure of central tendency. It is the value that exactly divides an ordered frequency distribution into equal halves. Therefore, 50% of the observations have values smaller than the median and the remaining 50% of the observations have values larger. The median is suitable only for describing central tendency in distributions where the categories of the variable can be ordered, as from lowest to highest.

### 3.6.2 Other Methodological Considerations

Certain other conventions should be noted in interpreting the findings of the study and how they are presented. Below we discuss the distinction between clients and respondents and describe the structure of reports available from the project.

**Clients Versus Respondents.** *Clients* are defined differently by program type. The kitchen and shelter programs are viewed as serving only those who are present at the program site. (Thus, in general for these providers, the survey respondents are representative of all clients.)<sup>6</sup> However, pantry programs are regarded as serving all members of respondents' households.

At the kitchen and shelter sites, the sampling unit was the individual. That is, the interviewers were instructed to treat members of a single household as separate respondents if they were selected by our random sampling process and met other eligibility criteria (such as being at least 18 years of age). At the pantry programs, on the other hand, the sampling unit was the household, and only one interview was completed for each randomly selected household, even when two or more members of the household were present at the program.

Ideally, the survey would have obtained all relevant information about every member of the household, especially among pantry users. However, so as not to overburden respondents, the survey was designed to acquire information about at most 10 members of the household, including the respondent. Also, this series of questions was limited to a set of variables of interest, such as sex, age, relationship to the respondent, citizenship, and employment status.

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<sup>6</sup> One exception was children at the kitchens and shelters. They were clients, but they were not respondents, because only clients age 18 or older were interviewed for this study. However, the children were taken into account in estimating the total number of clients.

Because households with more than 10 members are uncommon, we do not believe that this has significantly affected our estimates.

**National Versus Local Reports.** Hunger in America 2006 has produced a set of reports to serve both national and local interests and to be useful to a wide range of audiences with varying needs. The national report consists of information gathered through 155 participating members for the client survey and 162 members for the agency survey. In addition, in most cases, a local report was generated containing information on clients and agencies served by a particular member. There are roughly 155 member-level local reports. In addition, state-level reports were produced when all A2H network members in a particular state participated in this study. About 20 states achieved full participation of their members.

In addition to the comprehensive national and local reports, A2H will disseminate *Hunger in America 2006: An Extended Executive Summary*, which contains key findings from the comprehensive national report. A Technical Appendix, which describes in detail the methodologies of the current study, is available separately for technical audiences.

Tables in the local and national reports are numbered comparably to facilitate comparisons between the local and national findings. Not all tables from the national report are reproduced in the local documents.

**Statistical Sampling Variation and Measurement Error.** As with all estimates relying on statistical samples, the client survey estimates in this report are subject to “sampling error,” resulting from the fact that they are based on *samples* of clients rather than information about *all* clients. The margins of error due to this factor vary among individual estimates, depending on such factors as sample sizes, the nature of the client characteristics being estimated, and the number of different providers within a food bank at which the client data collection took place.

For most percentage estimates based on the full sample size for a food bank, this sampling variation can lead to “confidence intervals” extending at least plus-or-minus 8 percentage points around the estimate. For instance, if a certain client characteristic percentage is estimated to be 60% within a given food bank, and the “margin of error” is 8 percentage points, we can be reasonably certain it is someplace in the range of 52% to 68%. In many instances, particularly when the sample is divided by the type of providers that clients are using, the width of the confidence interval can be greater.

These issues are discussed in detail in Appendix A, where guidelines for estimating margins of error are described.

In addition to sampling error, there is also undoubtedly “measurement error” in some of the estimates presented in this report, due to the complexities of carrying out the survey work in a very decentralized context. Most of the interviewers did not have extensive experience in data collection work, and while MPR supplied general training guidelines and materials, there was undoubtedly considerable variation between food banks as to how the training was implemented. Inevitably, as in any survey, some interviewers may have read questions incorrectly, clients may have understood questions incorrectly, and even correct answers may have sometimes been incorrectly recorded on the survey instrument. All of these factors may have led to “measurement error” *which is in addition to the sampling error discussed above*. While this measurement error cannot be fully quantified, it should be recognized as a factor in examining the results.

### **3.7 REPORTING CONVENTIONS IN FOOD BANK REPORTS**

For some food banks, there were certain client-based tabular analyses for which fewer than 30 observations were available. (This happened mostly with shelters and, to a lesser extent,



kitchens.) In these instances, the relevant tabulations have not been included in the tables, because there are too few client observations for the results to be statistically reliable.<sup>7</sup>

When client tabulations have been suppressed because of small sample sizes, the entry *n.p.* (“not presented”) is made in the relevant columns of the tables. In these cases, the observations *are* included in computing the “total” column, which is aggregated across the three types of agencies.<sup>8</sup>

In some instances, there may be no observations available at all for a column of a table. In those cases, we have entered *N.A.* (“not available”).

### **3.8 DEGREE OF COMPARABILITY BETWEEN 2001 AND 2005 STUDIES**

It is also of interest to assess the comparability of the 2001 and 2005 studies. Most aspects of the two studies were similar. Both surveys (1) were based on the two-stage provider sampling approach described above, (2) used essentially the same client sampling techniques, (3) used similar questionnaires, and (4) were data-entered and analyzed using similar methods.

Nevertheless, some significant changes were made between the two study years. Most were developed to improve the study, by (1) increasing the accuracy of the data collection and analysis (through improved questions, improved operational procedures and forms, and more emphasis on training of topics that were confusing in 2001), or (2) reducing the considerable burden that falls on the food banks in implementing the study.

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<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, when presenting agency findings, we have reported tabulations with fewer than 30 programs, in part because some of the smaller members do not have as many as 30 kitchens or shelters.

<sup>8</sup> Because of a limitation of the computer system used to generate the member-level reports, in some instances a chart corresponding to a table with the *n.p.* or *N.A.* conventions may actually have a graphic corresponding to the suppressed column in the table. In those instances, that part of the chart should be ignored.

The Technical Appendix volume for the National Report provides a complete description of the survey and analysis methodologies. Here, however, we highlight the main salient methodological considerations:

- Developing improved estimates of client turnover in the A2H network
- Increasing screening of the provider sample for eligibility
- Improving the treatment of more than one interviewing visit to the same provider on the data file and in the analysis
- Incorporating detailed information on provider operating hours
- Increasing the number of participating food banks
- Taking into account the possibility of providers being open less than once a week
- Adjusting the estimated number of clients served by small providers where direct interviews did not occur

### **3.8.1 Estimating Client Turnover Rates Within the A2H System**

An important goal of the periodic A2H surveys has been to develop *annual* estimates of the number of different clients the system serves. However, this raises substantial methodological issues, as discussed below.

**Importance of “Newcomer” Rates and Key Resulting Estimation Issues.** The study depends on information obtained during the client interviews to draw inferences about client usage of the system over a 12-month period. Survey recall problems pose formidable challenges to interpreting the data, however, because many clients in the survey may not be able to recall and report their past usage patterns accurately for an entire year. Typically, clients are able to supply reasonably accurate information about their usage of the emergency food system during a recent period, such as a week (or even perhaps a month). As the recall period gets longer, however, their memory often becomes less reliable. While this is a problem for many surveys,

long recall periods may be particularly problematic for the A2H client population, because many of them are elderly, have disabilities, or are in low-income households where they are concentrating on how to meet day-to-day household needs with low resources, rather than thinking about the past year.

**The Survey Questions Related to Client Turnover.** In both the 2001 and the 2005 surveys, we tried to examine client turnover based on the self-reports of survey respondents about their patterns of using the A2H system. The research strategy focuses on what the 2001 report called the “newcomer rate,” defined as the percentage of clients at a given point who have started using A2H providers within the past month but had not used the A2H system in the previous 12 months. If we can estimate “newcomers” defined in this way for 12 months in a row, the sum yields a measure of all the people who entered the system during the past year.<sup>9</sup>

It was found during the 2001 survey, however, that the questions included to elicit this information were confusing to many respondents. In addition, response patterns were not always consistent.

At the outset of the 2005 study, to improve accuracy, we tried to develop alternative ways of obtaining these data on newcomer rates. The result was a single question that focused on the respondent’s estimate of the number of months the household had used the pantry in the previous year. During fielding of the 2005 survey, far fewer complaints were received about the new question than about the two previous ones. Furthermore, examination of the answer patterns for

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<sup>9</sup> Key to the approach outlined in the text is that a “newcomer” is defined as a person who starts using the A2H system *and has not previously used it for at least a year*. Of course, some people may enter and exit the system several times during the year; however, in making *annual unduplicated estimates*, we want to count these people only once a year.

the three 2005 questions and the two 2001 questions suggests that the response patterns to the two previous questions were broadly consistent for 2005.

### **3.8.2 Increased Provider Screening**

Screening to ensure provider eligibility for the survey was done more intensively in 2005 than in 2001. During the 2001 survey, it had become evident that many food banks had trouble distinguishing between providers that met the eligibility criteria for the survey (by being emergency food providers) and those that did not. For instance, congregate meal programs for seniors often were confused with emergency kitchens. Similarly, long-term group living facilities were sometimes confused with emergency shelters. In 2005, therefore, MPR staff spent more time training food bank personnel on the relevant distinctions than they had spent in 2001. We also modified the data collection forms to allow the food banks to provide detailed comments about the individual providers. In addition, MPR performed more screening of information provided by the food banks on the agencies and providers enumerated by the food banks. The effect was to increase the rate of ineligible agencies and providers and lower participant estimates somewhat. We believe that the result was a sample that was better focused on the target population.

### **3.8.3 Keeping More Information on Interviewing That Involved More than One Visit to Providers**

To achieve interview targets for both surveys (particularly in 2001), it was sometimes necessary to make more than one visit, on different days, to a provider. In 2001, summary information on these visits was combined and placed in a single data record on the analysis file. In 2005, we kept detailed data on each visit in separate data records. This allowed more complete and precise analysis of the sampling done at the sites.

### **3.8.4 Taking into Account the Fact That Some Providers Are Open More than Four Hours a Day**

In the 2001 data collection and analysis, we assumed that the observation period (including observations of number of clients) was the same as the period that providers were open. By the time of the 2005 survey, we had realized that this is not always true, and we built into the weighting algorithm an expansion factor to allow for clients who may have come on the day of sampling but not while the observers were there.

### **3.8.5 Number of Participating Food Banks**

The 2005 survey had considerably more coverage than the 2001 survey. In 2001, there were 97 food banks participating in the client survey (about half the food banks in the network). After adjusting for size, the 97 food banks were estimated to account for about two-thirds of all A2H operations. In the 2005 study, 155 food banks participated, and they are estimated to account for about 81% of all operations.

### **3.8.6 Allowing for the Possibility of Food Providers Being Open Less than Once a Week**

The data collection and analysis procedures used in 2001 assumed that all providers were open at least once a week. It became apparent that this was not always the case, however. Therefore, in 2005, the approach was made more general to allow for some providers being open less often.

### **3.8.7 Numbers of Clients Served by Small Providers**

During the 2001 survey, many food banks complained about the burden associated with sending teams of interviewers to very small providers that might have as few as two or three clients in a day. In 2005, we reduced the burden on food banks by excluding very small

providers from the survey work and imputing values for them in the data. Our rationale was that it would reduce data collection burden and increase cooperation, and because, by definition, these providers were small and could be accounted for by an adjustment factor in computing the sampling weights, the analysis would not be significantly affected. In general, the criterion chosen was to not send interviewers to providers that served fewer than 10 clients in a day.

During the analysis, several methods were considered for accounting for small providers in the estimates. One possible method was to incorporate a design-consistent ratio adjustment factor directly into the weighting process. In this adjustment, the number of clients at small providers would have been accounted for by using the ratio of the projected number of clients at all providers to the projected count of clients at large providers (with the ratio developed by provider type within food bank using 2005 sampling data from the individual food banks). Other methods considered involved imputing the estimates for clients at small providers based on data collected in 2001, when interviewing *was* done at small providers. Estimates were done using both approaches, and judgments about the likely accuracy of the methods were made in discussions with the Technical Advisory Group for the project and with MPR analysis team and sampling advisors. Based on these discussions, the method used was based on a variant of the imputation approach and was decided by the Technical Advisory Group and the MPR analysis team to be most accurate. This final approach was then implemented technically by including a ratio adjustment in the weighting process (by provider type), with the ratio set to achieve the estimate determined in the analysis described above.

### **3.8.8 Summary**

Because of the changes described above between the 2001 and 2005 surveys, and the implementation of improved methodologies and analytical techniques in 2005, the results of the

two surveys cannot be directly compared at a formal level. Several changes in the survey and analysis procedures were made to improve accuracy and reduce the burden the survey imposed on food banks. These changes could have shifted the survey findings, independent of the true underlying changes in the system.

On the other hand, overall, the underlying estimation objectives of the two surveys were essentially the same. Each survey represents the best attempt possible, given the methods available at the time, to estimate the number of A2H clients and their characteristics. Therefore, we believe it is useful to examine the results of the two surveys together to some degree. However, the conclusions reached by comparing the results across years should be taken as *indicative*, rather than as the results of formal statistical tests. In making comparisons across years, users should also remember that there are considerable statistical sampling margins associated with the estimates given in both the 2001 and 2005 reports. Many apparent differences may be due to this sampling variation, which is discussed in more detail in Appendix A.





#### **4. ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF AGENCIES AND CLIENTS**

As background for the detailed tabulations in subsequent chapters, this section presents estimates of the A2H clients and agencies in the area served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. These estimates are derived from the sampling and data collection work in the area covered.

In assessing the estimates presented below, remember that the A2H system is dynamic, is constantly changing. Also, because of various factors detailed later in the chapter, the available estimation methodologies sometimes involve substantial margins of error. Therefore, the estimates should be viewed as approximations rather than exact numbers.

Within this context, sections 4.1 and 4.2 present an overview of our estimates. Section 4.3 then discusses the limitations of these projections.

##### **4.1 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AGENCIES**

During the preparation for the survey work, A2H network members were asked to supply MPR with lists of all the member agencies to which they distribute food. MPR then carefully reviewed these lists, and to refine them, in some instances performed several stages of interaction with members.

On the basis of the final list of agencies generated by this process, we estimate that the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley served approximately 315 agencies at the time of the survey, of which 232 agencies responded to the agency survey. These responses contained usable information on 188 pantries, 24 kitchens, 14 shelters, and 224 other nonemergency food programs.

## 4.2 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CLIENTS

The Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley attempted interviews with clients at certain agencies that it serves, determined as a subsample of agencies MPR selected using randomizing procedures. Based on the results of this agency-level sampling process and of the random sampling of clients implemented at the sites, MPR developed survey weights that make the sample representative of all clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

From these weights we have developed estimates of the numbers of A2H clients served within the areas of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. Originally we did the weighting at the weekly level, to make the sample representative of clients served in a given week. We then extrapolated these weekly estimates to cover an annual period, using the same percentage projection factors as those used with the national data, as described in the *Hunger in America 2006 National Report*.

Based on this approach, the estimated number of different clients served per week by A2H emergency food providers in the area served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley is 96,300. The estimate of different clients served annually is 172,300. It is important to recognize that these estimates are based on relatively small survey samples and are therefore subject to considerable statistical sampling error (see Appendix A).

The weekly estimate is meant to be an estimate of the number of *different* people who use emergency food services supplied by the food bank in a week. Each person is only included once. For instance, if the same person goes to a soup kitchen three times during the week, that person is only counted *once* not three times. For pantry users, all persons in a household are included in the count.

The *annual unduplicated count* is defined similarly to the weekly count. It is an estimate of all of the people served during a year by emergency food providers that are supplied by the food bank. People who use the system multiple times are only counted once. For instance, if a household used a pantry every month for the year, members of that household would only be counted once. In general, the annual count will be much less than 52 times the weekly count, because most people getting food from a provider in a given week are likely to use the system in other weeks as well. On the other hand, the annual count is much larger than the weekly count because there is considerable turnover of people entering and leaving the system.

#### **4.3 BACKGROUND AND LIMITATIONS OF THE ESTIMATES**

We used several data sources to derive estimates of the size of the A2H system:

- Information from the survey sample frame of providers, which was compiled from records of A2H network members
- Information from the sampling and data collection operations concerning the observed numbers of clients served by providers, the providers' days of operation, and similar factors
- Information from the client survey concerning respondents' length and frequency of use of the emergency food system
- Information from A2H administrative files concerning the relative sizes of the A2H members that participated in the study compared with those that did not participate

Given these rich data sources, several approaches could be taken in the estimation work. In much of the work below, we drew primarily on an approach, rooted in standard statistical estimation theory, whereby we (1) computed the probabilities of various providers and clients being in our survey sample, (2) computed analysis weights based on these probabilities, and (3) estimated the underlying population totals by summing the relevant analysis weights. In some instances, however, we employed alternative approaches to supplement the estimates.

For each food bank, the estimate of *weekly* clients served is derived from the sums of the weekly client weights for the food bank. As described in detail in the National Report for the study, these weekly rates reflect the probabilities of client selection at the multiple sampling stages,<sup>10</sup> together with adjustments for non-response and similar factors.

For estimates of *annual* unduplicated clients at the food bank level, the basic approach taken was to allocate the national total as estimated in the National Report, among the various food banks. In part, the allocation process was based on the food bank-level weekly estimates derived during the weighting process. In addition, because of the relatively small sample sizes at the food bank level, we used a second variable, the “goal factor” determined by A2H to essentially provide more stability and thus anchor the estimates.<sup>11</sup> Specifically, we (1) rescaled the goal factors to place them on a scale comparable to the estimates based on the sums of statistical weights; (2) took the simple average of these two components (sums of weights and rescaled goal factor) to form a composite indicator; and then (3) used that composite index to proportionately allocate the national totals to the individual food banks.

There is unavoidably some uncertainty in the estimates presented. This uncertainty derives from several factors, including:

- **Reporting Error.** Some of the interview questions on which our estimates are based were unavoidably somewhat complex. As a result, there is undoubtedly some error caused by respondents not always understanding the questions and not always reporting accurately.

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<sup>10</sup> Including sampling agencies, sampling providers within agencies, and sampling clients within providers.

<sup>11</sup> The goal factor is based on population and poverty data and is designed to be a measure of the relative need for emergency food in each food bank’s service area.

- ***Nonresponse Bias.*** As with any survey, it must be assumed that there is at least some nonresponse error caused by the agencies and clients who did not respond to our surveys being different from those that did.
- ***Alternative Estimation Methods.*** As the subsequent discussion makes clear, several methods could be used in deriving the results presented below. Our discussion explains the reasons for the choices we make, but some judgment is involved in this and may influence the final results.
- ***Seasonality.*** Because of logistical requirements, most of the data were collected during the spring of 2005. It is therefore not possible with this data set to fully examine and correct for fluctuations in providers of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley and clients over the entire year.



## 5. CLIENTS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

One of the most important purposes of the evaluation has been to develop a description of the people and households served by the A2H network. Key findings are presented in this section.

We begin by describing the client sample on which the analysis is based. Section 5.2 then provides an overall profile of clients served by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. Subsequent sections then provide additional details about clients' demographic characteristics, citizenship, education levels, household income levels, and other resources.

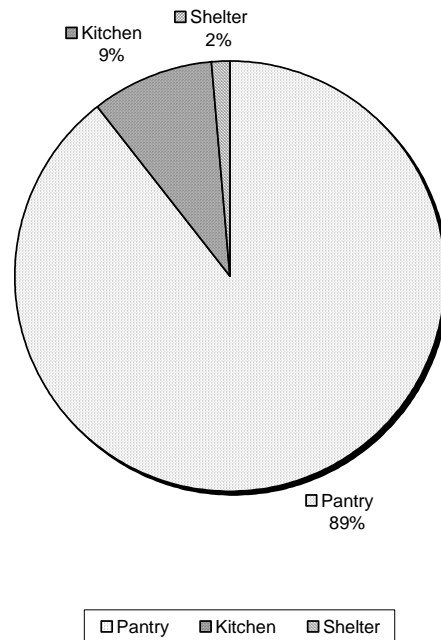
### 5.1 NUMBER OF CLIENT RESPONDENTS

A total of 514 clients were interviewed at selected program sites of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The clients interviewed at the pantry programs (420 clients) account for 81.7% of all client respondents. Those interviewed at the kitchen programs (76 clients) make up 14.8% of the total, and those interviewed at the shelter programs (18 clients) account for the remaining 3.5%. See Table 5.1.1, which also shows the percentage distribution after the weights described earlier were applied to each observation.

TABLE 5.1.1  
NUMBER OF CLIENT RESPONDENTS

Site of Interview	Client Respondents		
	Number	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage
Pantry	420	81.7%	89.5%
Kitchen	76	14.8%	9.0%
Shelter	18	3.5%	1.5%
TOTAL	514	100.0%	100.0%

**CHART 5.1.1 WEIGHTED PERCENTAGES OF CLIENT RESPONDENTS  
By Type of Interview Site**





## 5.2 SUMMARY DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Client respondents provided information about various demographic characteristics of themselves and their households. Table 5.2.1 summarizes the demographic profile of the client households of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. It also contains statistics about adult clients who visit A2H emergency food programs.

TABLE 5.2.1  
SUMMARY DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF A2H CLIENTS  
(Client Households of A2H Emergency Food Providers)

	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter	All
<b>Client Households</b>				
Size of household <sup>a</sup>				
Households with 1 member	34.1%	56.7%	n.p.	37.0%
Households with 2-3 members	50.1%	25.0%	n.p.	47.2%
Households with 4-6 members	13.3%	15.1%	n.p.	13.3%
Households with more than 6 members	2.5%	3.2%	n.p.	2.5%
Average household size	2.3	2.3	n.p.	2.3
Median household size	2	1	n.p.	2
Households with nonfamily members	0.5%	0.8%	n.p.	0.5%
Households with one or more adults employed	28.0%	56.6%	n.p.	30.5%
Households with single parents	5.3%	4.8%	n.p.	5.3%
Households with single parents among households with children younger than age 18 <sup>b</sup>	25.3%	64.6%	n.p.	26.8%
Elderly and children in household				
Households with children younger than age 18	21.2%	7.5%	n.p.	19.7%
Households with children ages 0-5 years	8.8%	5.3%	n.p.	8.3%
Households with children ages 0-3 years	6.2%	5.0%	n.p.	6.0%
Households with any member 65 years or older	46.4%	42.5%	n.p.	45.8%

TABLE 5.2.1 (*continued*)

	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter	All
<b>Adult Clients at Program Sites</b>				
Adult Clients at Program Sites				
Male	44.9%	59.5%	n.p.	47.0%
Female	55.1%	40.5%	n.p.	53.0%
U.S. citizens	85.9%	76.4%	n.p.	84.9%
Registered voters <sup>c</sup>	75.4%	60.4%	n.p.	74.1%
Married or living as married	54.2%	58.1%	n.p.	54.1%
High school graduate	30.7%	39.3%	n.p.	31.6%
Currently employed	23.2%	37.9%	n.p.	24.6%
Clients in suburban/rural areas	27.3%	39.6%	n.p.	28.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 11a, 12, 81a, and 82 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses, except for the percentage of employed clients (See Table 5.7.2). All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

<sup>a</sup>For all programs, responses greater than 24 people in a household were recoded as 24 people. Additional data are available for at most 10 members of each household. See Chapter 3 for details.

<sup>b</sup>The sample size is 230 for the pantry, 8 for the kitchen 4 for the shelter, and 242 for all.

<sup>c</sup>For registered voters, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.2% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.6% for all clients.

The upper part of Table 5.2.1 shows the compositions of A2H client households of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The mean household size is 2.3, and 30.5% of the households have an employed adult. In addition:

- 37.0% of the client households are single-person households.
- 2.5% of the client households have more than six members.
- Among client households with children younger than age 18, 26.8% are single-parent households.
- 19.7% of the client households have at least one member younger than age 18.
- 8.3% of the client households have one or more children ages 0 to 5 years.

- 45.8% of the households have at least one member age 65 years or older.

The lower part of Table 5.2.1 shows that 47.0% of the adult clients visiting emergency food programs are men, while 53.0% are women. (Table 5.3.1 contains detailed age, gender, and citizenship information.) Of them, 84.9% are U.S. citizens, 31.6% are high school graduates, and 24.6% are currently working. These statistics, however, take into account only the client population who come to the program sites. Since the pantries' client base is not limited to the individual members who come to pick up food, but includes all members of such clients' households, it is also of interest to examine similar tabulations based on all individual members of client households. Table 5.3.2 in the next section presents age, gender, and citizenship composition of all members of client households.

### 5.3 AGE, GENDER, AND CITIZENSHIP COMPOSITION

Clients interviewed were asked to provide information on age, gender, and U.S. citizenship for themselves and for at most nine members of their households. Table 5.3.1 shows the distribution of each variable only among the population represented by clients interviewed at program sites. Table 5.3.2 shows the distribution among all members of client households.

TABLE 5.3.1  
AGE, GENDER, AND CITIZENSHIP COMPOSITION  
(Adult Clients at A2H Program Sites)

	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
Age				
18-29	4.2%	9.7%	n.p.	4.7%
30-49	19.5%	23.7%	n.p.	20.3%
50-64	24.5%	24.8%	n.p.	24.5%
65 and over	51.8%	41.8%	n.p.	50.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Gender				
Male	44.9%	59.5%	n.p.	47.0%
Female	55.1%	40.5%	n.p.	53.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
U.S. Citizen				
Yes	85.9%	76.4%	n.p.	84.9%
No	14.1%	23.6%	n.p.	15.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 2, 3, and 5 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For age, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 14.9% for pantry clients, 8.2% for kitchen clients, 0.8% for shelter clients, and 14.1% for all clients.

For gender, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.1% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.0% for all clients.

For citizenship, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.0% for pantry clients, 2.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.2% for all clients.

Among the adults clients who come to program sites, 4.7% are ages 18 to 29; 20.3% ages 30 to 49; 24.5% ages 50 to 64; and 50.4% ages 65 and older. In addition:

- Among the adult pantry clients who were represented at the interview sites (not including all members of their households), 4.2% are ages 18 to 29; 19.5% ages 30 to 49; 24.5% ages 50 to 64; and 51.8% ages 65 and older.
- 44.9% of adult pantry clients at program sites are male.
- 85.9% of adult pantry clients at program sites are U.S. citizens.
- Among the adult kitchen clients, 9.7% are ages 18 to 29, 23.7% ages 30 to 49, 24.8% ages 50 to 64, and 41.8% ages 65 and older.
- 59.5% of adult kitchen clients at program sites are male.
- 76.4% of adult kitchen clients at program sites are U.S. citizens.
- Among the adult shelter clients, n.p. are ages 18 to 29, n.p. ages 30 to 49, n.p. ages 50 to 64, and n.p. ages 65 and older.
- n.p. of adult shelter clients at program sites are male.
- n.p. of adult shelter clients at program sites are U.S. citizens.

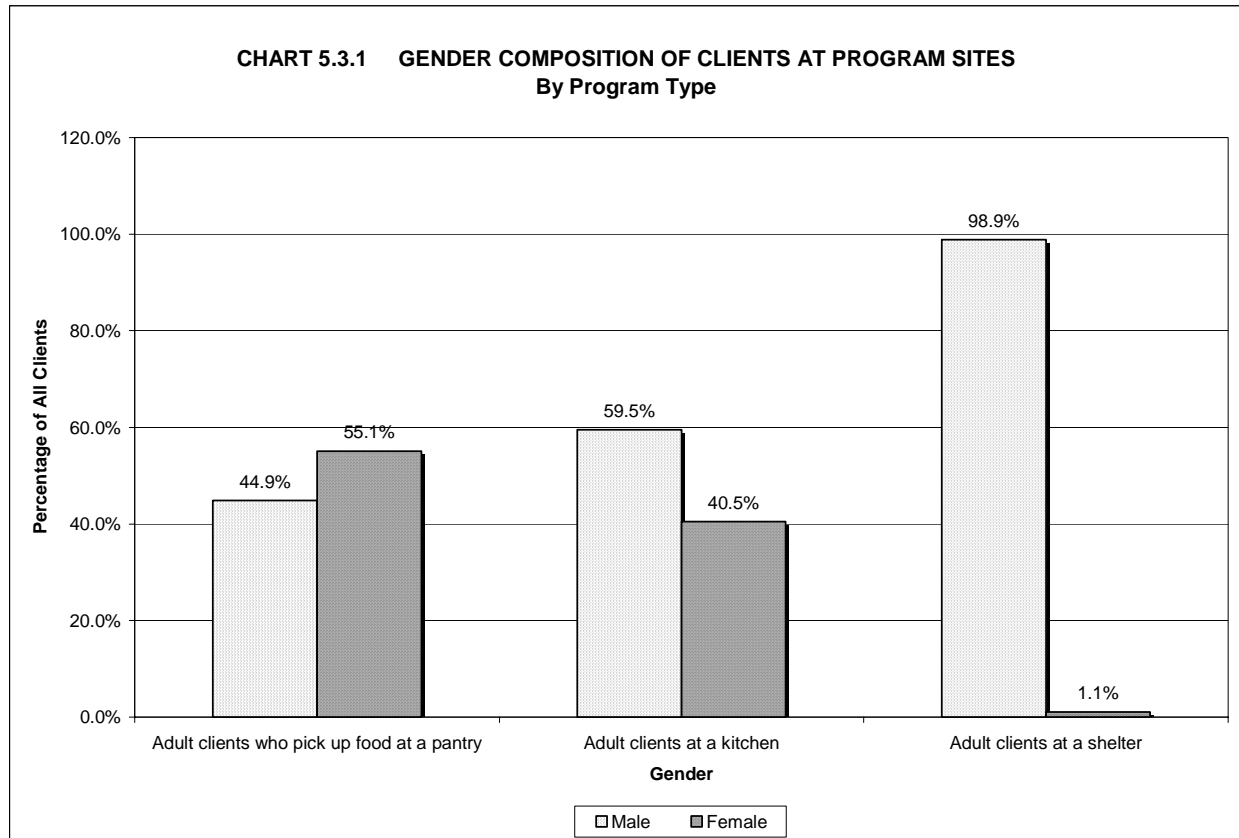


TABLE 5.3.2

AGE, GENDER, AND CITIZENSHIP COMPOSITION  
(All Members of Households)<sup>a</sup>

	All Members of Household, Pantry	All Members of Household, Kitchen	All Members of Household, Shelter	All Members of Household, All Programs
Age				
0-3	3.8%	4.2%	n.p.	3.8%
4-5	3.1%	0.5%	n.p.	2.8%
6-17	18.0%	6.6%	n.p.	17.0%
18-29	7.1%	17.4%	n.p.	7.9%
30-49	15.5%	21.2%	n.p.	16.2%
50-64	19.2%	23.7%	n.p.	19.6%
65 and over	33.4%	26.5%	n.p.	32.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,608</b>
Gender				
Male	44.7%	50.2%	n.p.	45.4%
Female	55.3%	49.8%	n.p.	54.6%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
U.S. Citizen				
Yes	81.0%	72.6%	n.p.	80.4%
No	19.0%	27.4%	n.p.	19.6%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,571</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 2, 3, and 5 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For age, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 13.9% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.7% for shelter clients, and 13.1% for all clients.

For gender, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.4% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.7% for all clients.

For citizenship, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.5% for pantry clients, 1.4% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.5% for all clients.

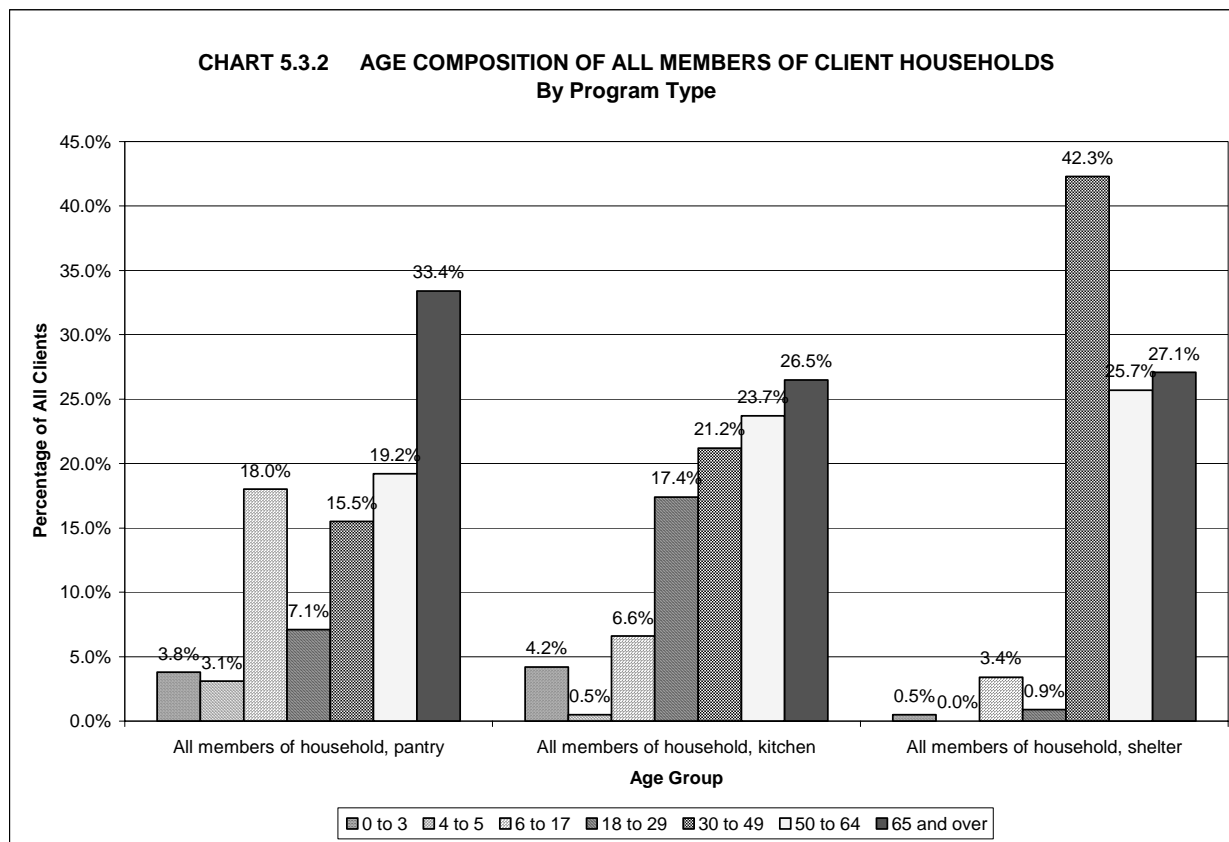
<sup>a</sup>Data available for at most 10 members of household. See the Technical Appendix volume for details.

<sup>b</sup>The sample sizes for age variables may be larger than those for the other two variables in this table. This is because the client questionnaire had additional questions to identify household members who are younger than age 18 and whether the household has any children between ages 0 and 5.

When we consider all members of client households, 6.6% are ages 0 to 5, 17.0% ages 6 to 17, 7.9% ages 18 to 29, 16.2% ages 30 to 49, 19.6% ages 50 to 64, and 32.8% ages 65 and older. Information on age distribution, as well as gender and citizenship distributions, by program type follows:

- Among all members of pantry client households, 6.8% are ages 0 to 5; 18.0% ages 6 to 17; 7.1% ages 18 to 29; 15.5% ages 30 to 49, 19.2% ages 50 to 64, and 33.4% ages 65 and older.
- 44.7% of all members of pantry client households are male.
- 81.0% of all members of pantry client households are U.S. citizens.
- Among all members of kitchen client households, 4.7% are ages 0 to 5; 6.6% ages 6 to 17; 17.4% ages 18 to 29; 21.2% 30 to 49; 23.7% ages 50 to 64, and 26.5% ages 65 and older.
- 50.2% of all members of kitchen client households are male.
- 72.6% of all members of kitchen client households are U.S. citizens.
- Among all members of shelter client households, 0.5% are ages 0 and 5; n.p. ages 6 and 17; n.p. ages 18 to 29; n.p. ages 30 to 49; n.p. ages 50 to 64; and n.p. ages 65 and older.
- n.p. of all members of shelter client households are male.
- n.p. of all members of shelter client households are U.S. citizens.





## 5.4 MARITAL STATUS

Clients were asked about their marital status. Table 5.4.1 presents the results.

TABLE 5.4.1  
MARITAL STATUS  
(Adults Interviewed at A2H Emergency Food Providers)

Clients' Marital Status	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
Married	51.2%	53.1%	n.p.	50.9%
Living as married	3.0%	5.0%	n.p.	3.2%
Widowed	23.3%	22.0%	n.p.	23.0%
Divorced	5.8%	10.3%	n.p.	6.2%
Separated	4.0%	5.2%	n.p.	5.0%
Never been married	12.6%	4.4%	n.p.	11.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 9 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.0% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.4% for all clients.

Key findings include:

- Overall, 50.9% of the clients at all program sites are married.
  - The percentage of married clients at pantry programs is 51.2%.
  - The percentage of married clients at kitchen programs is 53.1%.
  - The percentage of married clients at shelter programs is n.p..
- 3.2% of the clients at all program sites are living as married.
- 23.0% of the clients at all program sites are widowed.
- 5.0% of the clients at all program sites are separated.
- 11.8% of the clients at all program sites have never been married.

## 5.5 HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ATTAINED

Clients were asked the highest education level they had attained. Education levels of clients based on their responses are provided in Table 5.5.1.

TABLE 5.5.1  
HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ATTAINED  
(Adults Interviewed at A2H Emergency Food Providers)

Clients' Education Level	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	All Adult Clients
Less than high school	69.3%	60.7%	n.p.	68.4%
Completed high school or equivalent degree	9.9%	33.0%	n.p.	12.1%
Completed noncollege business/trade/technical school	0.9%	0.1%	n.p.	0.8%
Some college/two-year degree	9.2%	4.3%	n.p.	8.9%
Completed college or higher	10.7%	1.9%	n.p.	9.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 10 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.8% for pantry clients, 7.3% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 1.4% for all clients.

As Table 5.5.1 shows, 68.4% of the clients at emergency food programs have not completed high school. The comparable percentage for the entire U.S. adult population is 15.4%.<sup>12</sup> More details follow:

<sup>12</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2004-2005*. Table No. 212.

- 12.1% of all clients finished high school but no further education beyond high school.
- 8.9% of all clients have some college education or completed a two-year degree.
- 9.8% of all clients have completed college or beyond.

## 5.6 RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Clients were asked about their racial and ethnic background. Table 5.6.1 summarizes the results.

TABLE 5.6.1  
RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND  
(Adults Interviewed at A2H Emergency Food Providers)

Clients' Racial <sup>a</sup> and Ethnic Background	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	All Adult Clients
Non-Hispanic White <sup>b</sup>	19.9%	2.9%	n.p.	18.1%
Non-Hispanic Black	0.2%	0.0%	n.p.	0.2%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Latino or Hispanic				
Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano	78.9%	95.1%	n.p.	80.6%
Puerto Rican	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
Cuban	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Other Latino or Hispanic	0.8%	1.7%	n.p.	0.8%
SUBTOTAL	79.8%	96.8%	n.p.	81.5%
Other <sup>c</sup>	0.0%	2.9%	n.p.	0.3%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 11, 11a, and 12 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For race, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.1% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.1% for all clients.

For ethnicity, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.1% for pantry clients, 7.4% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.7% for all clients.

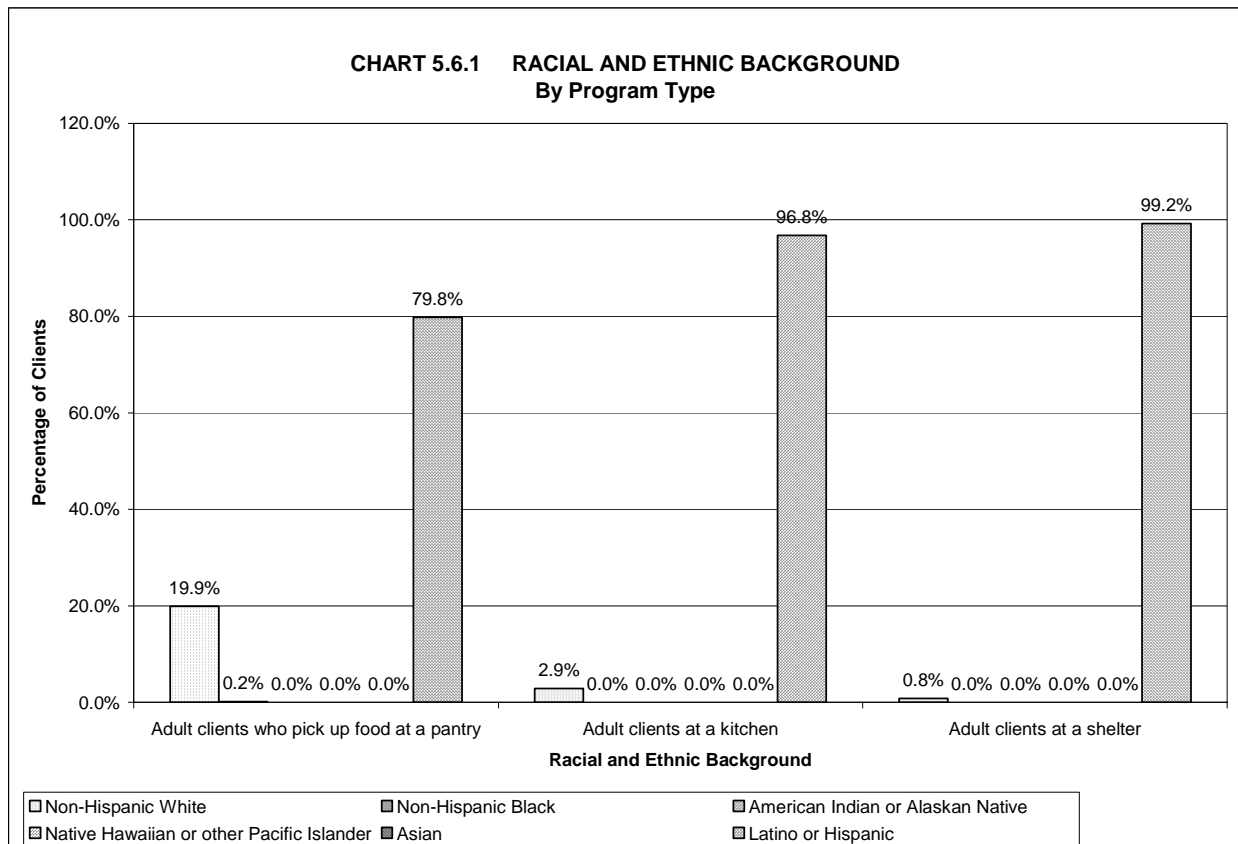
<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted for races.

<sup>b</sup>Note that Table 5.6.1 of *Hunger in America 2001* showed racial distribution of all respondents regardless of their ethnicity. In the current table, race categories (including "Other") reflect racial distribution of non-Hispanic respondents only.

<sup>c</sup>Most respondents who marked "Other" as their choice did not provide further information. Those who provided an answer sometimes indicated their nationality, but because the number of usable responses was small, recoding of those responses based on this information was not performed.

Racial or ethnic background of the clients at emergency food program sites follows:

- Among the clients who come to all program sites, 18.1% are non-Hispanic white; 0.2% non-Hispanic black; and 0.0% American Indian or Alaskan Native.
- 0.0% are native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 0.0% are Asian.
- A total of 81.5% of the clients at all program sites indicate they are Spanish, Latino, or of Hispanic descent or origin.



## 5.7 EMPLOYMENT OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD

Client respondents provided information on their households' current employment status.

Tables 5.7.1 and 5.7.2 present the findings regarding all adults in the households.<sup>13</sup>

TABLE 5.7.1  
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD

	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter	All
Percentage of employed adults among all adults in client households	20.5%	36.2%	n.p.	22.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>974</b>
Percentage of employed adults among adults younger than age 65 in client household	34.1%	37.9%	n.p.	34.6%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>726</b>
Percentage of client households with one or more adults employed	28.0%	56.6%	n.p.	30.5%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on all responses to questions 3 and 6 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages in this table, unlike those in most other tables, were calculated without leaving out item nonresponses. Because this table was constructed combining responses to several questions, excluding item nonresponses could have caused confusion.

For all adults in the household, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.7% for pantry clients, 0.4% for kitchen clients, 0.2% for shelter clients, and 0.7% for all clients.

For adults younger than age 65 in the household, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.2% for pantry clients, 0.1% for kitchen clients, 0.3% for shelter clients, and 0.2% for all clients.

For client households, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.0% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.2% for shelter clients, and 0.0% for all clients.

Among the adults who come to program sites, 24.6% are currently employed. When we consider all adults in client households, 22.0% are employed.

<sup>13</sup> Data are available for at most 10 members of the household. See Technical Appendix volume for details.

- 28.0% of the pantry client households have one or more adults currently employed.
- 56.6% of the kitchen client households have one or more adults currently employed.
- n.p. of the shelter client households have one or more adults currently employed.

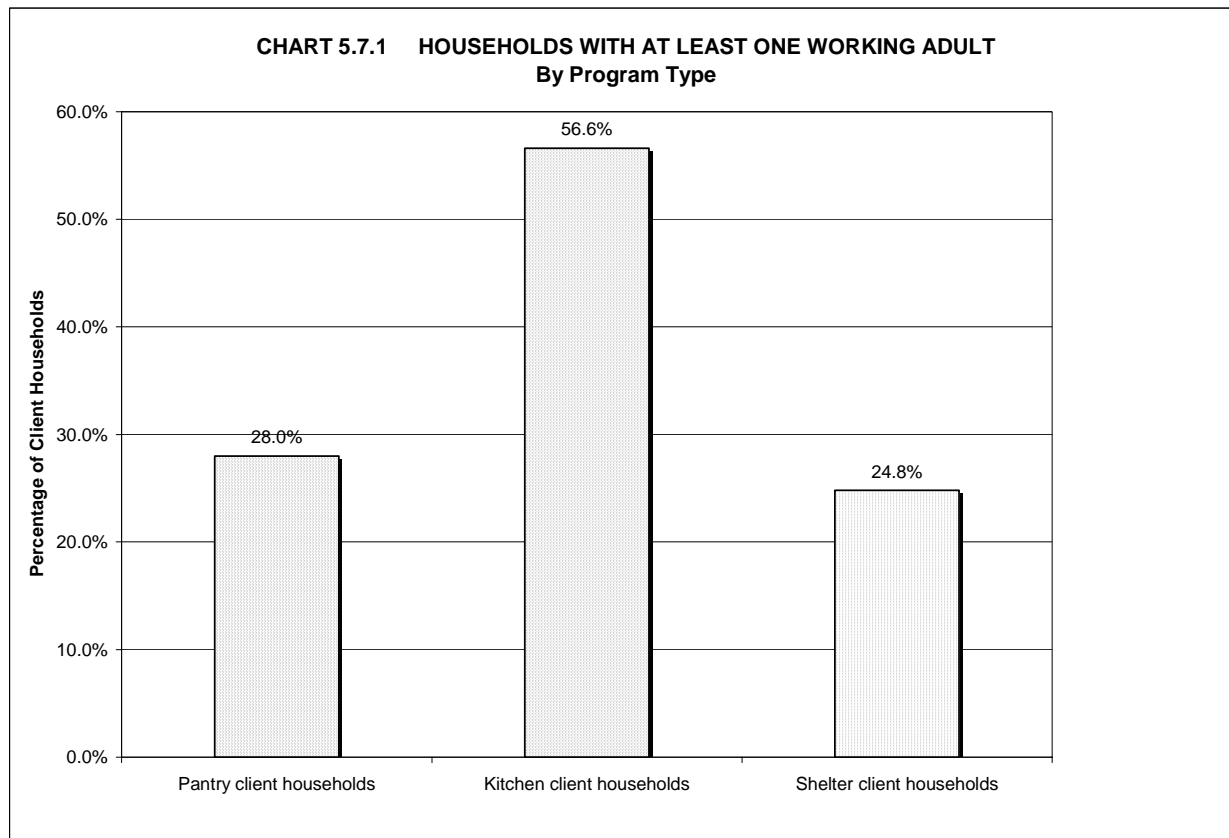




TABLE 5.7.2

## DETAILED EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD

	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter	All
Current employment status of all adults in client households				
Full-time	5.5%	10.8%	n.p.	5.9%
Part-time	15.1%	25.4%	n.p.	16.1%
Unemployed	79.5%	63.8%	n.p.	78.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>974</b>
Current employment status of all adults in client households younger than age 65 <sup>a</sup>				
Full-time	10.7%	16.1%	n.p.	11.2%
Part-time	22.3%	21.8%	n.p.	22.4%
Unemployed	67.0%	62.1%	n.p.	66.4%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>726</b>
Employment status of adult clients interviewed at program sites				
Currently working				
Full-time	2.6%	3.5%	n.p.	2.7%
Part-time	20.6%	34.7%	n.p.	22.0%
Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
SUBTOTAL	23.2%	37.9%	n.p.	24.6%
Currently not working	76.8%	62.1%	n.p.	75.4%
Have not worked for				
Less than 3 months	3.2%	6.2%	n.p.	3.8%
3-5 months	1.2%	0.8%	n.p.	1.2%
6-8 months	0.9%	0.7%	n.p.	0.8%
9-11 months	1.5%	0.0%	n.p.	1.3%
1-2 years	9.8%	18.7%	n.p.	10.9%
More than 2 years	40.2%	26.0%	n.p.	38.7%
Unknown	6.9%	9.4%	n.p.	7.0%
SUBTOTAL	63.6%	61.8%	n.p.	63.6%
Never worked	13.3%	3.8%	n.p.	12.2%
Unknown	0.0%	0.7%	n.p.	0.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

TABLE 5.7.2 (*continued*)

	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter	All
Clients with managerial or professional jobs among those who have worked before or are currently working	10.1%	6.3%	n.p.	10.3%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients at program sites who have worked before or are currently working</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>432</b>
Clients participating in government-sponsored job training or work experience programs among those who have never worked	1.4%	n.p.	n.p.	1.4%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients who have never worked</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>59</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on all responses to questions 3, 6, 12a, 13, 14a, and 15 of the client survey.

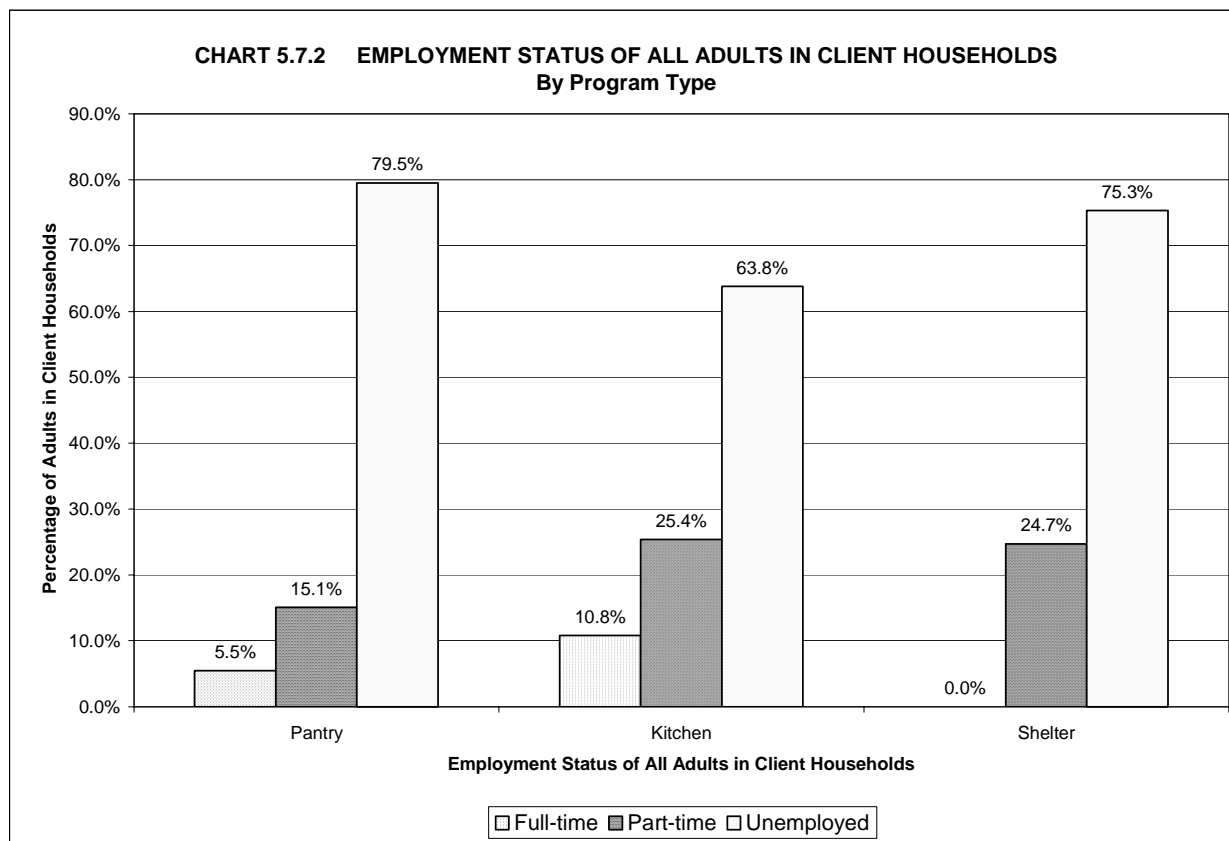
NOTE: The percentages in this table, unlike those in most other tables, were calculated without leaving out item nonresponses (labeled “unknown”). Because this table was constructed combining responses to several questions, excluding item nonresponses could have caused confusion. All responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients or households of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

<sup>a</sup>Includes only households with at least one adult younger than age 65.

As shown in Table 5.7.2, when we consider the employment status of all adults in client households, 5.9% are employed full-time, 16.1% are employed part-time, and the remaining 78.0% are currently unemployed. Details of the employment status of adult clients who come to program sites follow:

- Overall, 2.7% of the adult clients at program sites are currently employed full-time; 22.0% employed part-time.
- 3.8% of the clients have recently lost their job, having been unemployed for three months or less.
- 10.9% of all clients have been unemployed for one to two years.
- 38.7% of all clients have not worked for more than two years.
- Among those who have worked before or are currently working, 10.3% either had or currently have managerial or professional jobs.

- 12.2% of the clients had never worked; of these, 1.4% are participating in government-sponsored job training or work experience programs.



## 5.8 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Lack of sufficient income usually plays a major role in forcing a person or a family to seek assistance from an A2H emergency food provider. In this section, we examine patterns of income receipt, for both monthly and annual income.

### 5.8.1 Federal Poverty Level

The U.S. government periodically establishes poverty guidelines to provide an indication of the levels of income below which households of various sizes would be considered impoverished. In parts of the analysis in this section, it will be useful to refer to these guidelines as a tool in understanding the meaning of various income levels. For reference, Table 5.8.1.1 presents 100% of these federal poverty levels.

TABLE 5.8.1.1  
THE 2005 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL—MONTHLY INCOME

Household Size	48 Contiguous States and DC	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$798	\$996	\$918
2	\$1,069	\$1,336	\$1,230
3	\$1,341	\$1,676	\$1,543
4	\$1,613	\$2,016	\$1,855
5	\$1,884	\$2,356	\$2,168
6	\$2,156	\$2,696	\$2,480
7	\$2,428	\$3,036	\$2,793
8	\$2,699	\$3,376	\$3,105
Each additional member	+\$272	+\$340	+\$313

SOURCE: Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 33, February 18, 2005, pp. 8373-8375.

NOTE: The 2005 federal poverty guidelines (also known as the federal poverty level) reflect price changes through calendar year 2004; accordingly they are approximately equal to the Census Bureau poverty thresholds for calendar year 2004.

### 5.8.2 Household Income for the Previous Month

Clients were asked to report their total household income for the previous month or to choose from a set of predefined income brackets. The results are in Table 5.8.2.1.

TABLE 5.8.2.1

#### HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH

Income for the Previous Month	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Total monthly income				
No income	9.2%	4.3%	n.p.	8.6%
\$1-\$499	13.5%	24.8%	n.p.	14.8%
\$500-\$999	36.2%	46.1%	n.p.	36.9%
\$1,000-\$1,499	26.2%	7.6%	n.p.	24.4%
\$1,500-\$1,999	12.0%	12.7%	n.p.	11.9%
\$2,000-\$2,499	0.5%	0.0%	n.p.	0.8%
\$2,500-\$2,999	0.4%	0.0%	n.p.	0.4%
\$3,000 or more	0.3%	0.0%	n.p.	0.3%
Unknown	1.6%	4.6%	n.p.	1.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Average monthly income among valid responses (in dollars) <sup>a</sup>				
	850	760	n.p.	840
Median monthly income among valid responses (in dollars)				
	760	700	n.p.	760
Income as a percentage of the federal poverty level <sup>b</sup>				
0% (no income)	9.2%	4.3%	n.p.	8.6%
1%-50%	15.0%	34.6%	n.p.	17.0%
51%-75%	25.4%	11.7%	n.p.	24.1%
76%-100%	24.8%	23.5%	n.p.	24.3%
101%-130%	7.3%	8.6%	n.p.	7.3%
131%-150%	6.4%	0.0%	n.p.	6.0%
151%-185%	10.0%	0.1%	n.p.	8.9%
186% or higher	0.4%	12.7%	n.p.	1.8%
Unknown	1.6%	4.6%	n.p.	1.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Average monthly income as percentage of the poverty level among valid responses				
	78.7%	82.6%	n.p.	79.6%
Median monthly income as percentage of the poverty level among valid responses				
	74.8%	70.1%	n.p.	74.8%

TABLE 5.8.2.1 (*continued*)

Income for the Previous Month	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on all responses to questions 29 and 29a of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table, unlike those in most other tables, were calculated without leaving out item nonresponses (labeled “unknown”). To ensure that key percentages, such as that for no income, appear consistent within this table and across related tables, a constant denominator, which includes item nonresponses, was used. All responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients or households of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

For total monthly income, missing, don’t know, and refusal responses combined are 1.6% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, n.p. for shelter clients, and 1.9% for all clients. The missing rates we report here were obtained after we cross-imputed missing responses for monthly and yearly income variables.

For income as percentage of federal poverty level, missing, don’t know, and refusal responses combined are 1.6% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, n.p. for shelter clients, and 1.9% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>For the calculation of the average and the median, responses given as a range were recoded to be the midpoint of the range.

<sup>b</sup>The percentages in this panel may not be equal to those in the corresponding row of the upper panel of this table because the two panels of data may have different item nonresponse rates. The calculation in the lower panel required information about household size as well as household income.

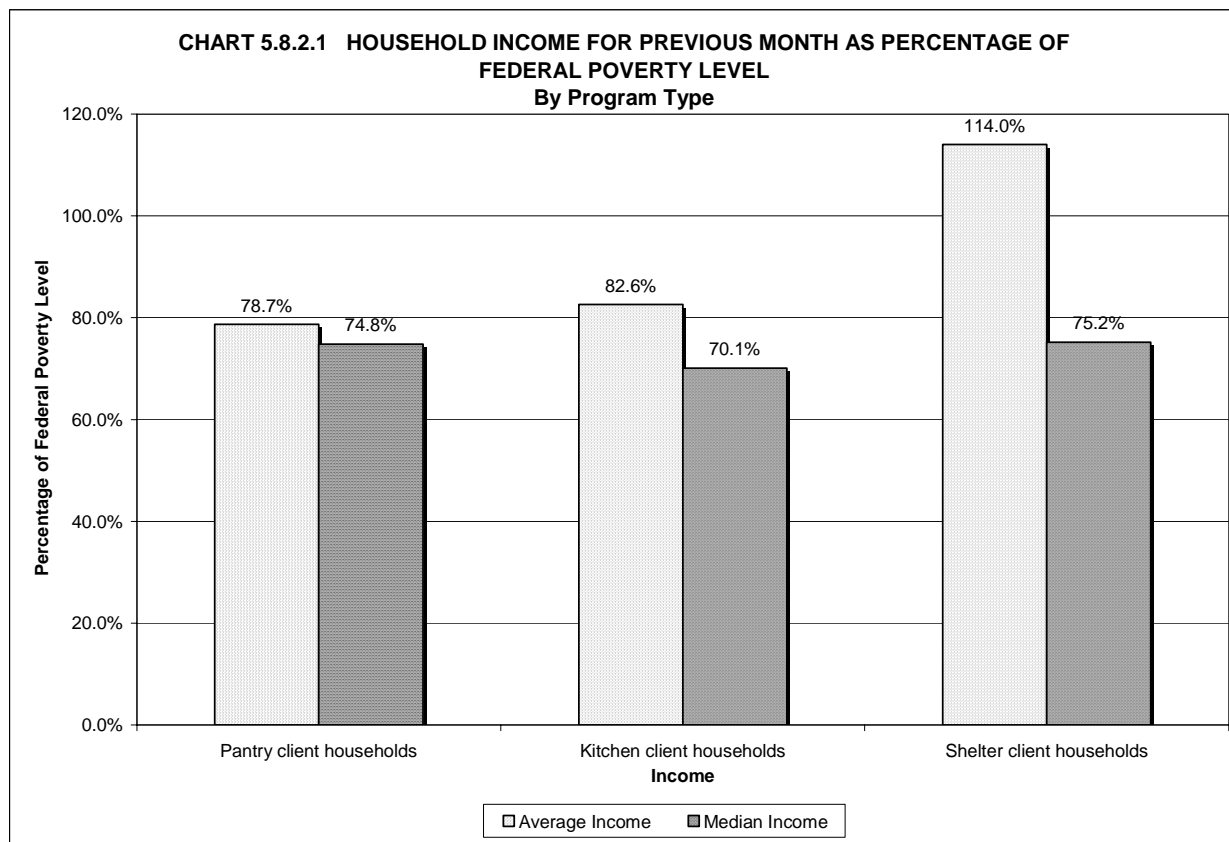
Table 5.8.2.1 shows that 8.6% of all client households had no income at all for the month prior to the interview. More details on income follow:

- 9.2% of the pantry client households had no monthly income.
- 4.3% of the kitchen client households had no monthly income.
- n.p. of the shelter client households had no monthly income.
- 60.4% of all client households had monthly household income less than \$1,000.

- Average household income among all clients during the previous month was \$840 (median: \$760). By contrast, the mean for the U.S. population as a whole in 2004 was \$5,006 (median: \$3,724).<sup>14</sup>
- Average monthly household income among the pantry clients was \$850 (median: \$760).
- Average monthly household income among the kitchen clients was \$760 (median: \$700).
- Average monthly household income among the shelter clients was \$n.p. (median: \$n.p.).
- 81.4% of client households had an income of 130% or below the federal poverty level during the previous month.
- Average monthly household income among all client households as a percentage of the federal poverty level was 79.6% (median: 74.8%).
- Average monthly household income among pantry client households was 78.7% (median: 74.8%) of the federal poverty level.
- Average monthly household income among kitchen client households was 82.6% (median: 70.1%) of the federal poverty level.
- Average monthly household income among shelter client households was n.p. (median: n.p.) of the federal poverty level.

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2004. August 2005, pp. 60-229.





### 5.8.3 Sources of Household Income for the Previous Month

Clients were asked to indicate the major source of their household income for the previous month. They were then asked to name all sources of their household income. Table 5.8.3.1 and Table 5.8.3.2 summarize the findings.

TABLE 5.8.3.1

#### MAIN SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH

Main Source of Household Income for Previous Month	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Job	18.5%	36.9%	n.p.	20.5%
Government welfare assistance				
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	0.7%	1.9%	n.p.	0.8%
General Assistance (GA) <sup>a</sup>	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
SUBTOTAL	0.7%	1.9%	n.p.	0.8%
Other government sources				
Social Security	55.0%	35.2%	n.p.	52.5%
Unemployment compensation	1.4%	0.1%	n.p.	1.3%
Disability (SSDI)/Workers' Compensation	1.4%	12.3%	n.p.	2.4%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	1.1%	0.2%	n.p.	1.0%
SUBTOTAL	58.9%	47.8%	n.p.	57.1%
Nongovernment, nonjob sources				
Pension	0.6%	0.0%	n.p.	0.5%
Child support	0.8%	0.0%	n.p.	0.7%
Churches	0.0%	0.6%	n.p.	0.1%
Alimony	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Relatives	6.1%	0.3%	n.p.	5.5%
SUBTOTAL	7.4%	0.9%	n.p.	6.7%
Other <sup>b</sup>	0.4%	3.6%	n.p.	1.0%
No income	9.2%	4.3%	n.p.	8.6%
Unknown	4.9%	4.6%	n.p.	5.2%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on all responses to questions 29 and 30 of the client survey.

TABLE 5.8.3.1 (*continued*)

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NOTES: The percentages presented in this table, unlike those in most other tables, were calculated without leaving out item nonresponses (labeled “unknown”). To ensure that key percentages, such as that for no income, appear consistent within this table and across related tables, a constant denominator, which includes item nonresponses, was used. All responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients or households of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

Missing, don’t know, and refusal responses combined are 4.9% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, n.p. for shelter clients, and 5.2% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>Estimates for GA and TANF should be used with caution, since some respondents may not have understood the names of the programs under which they were receiving benefits. Indeed, in some states, the regular GA program is not offered, although other sources of assistance are sometimes available and could have been confused with GA. States where GA is not available include but are not limited to Georgia, Michigan, and Oklahoma.

<sup>b</sup>This includes some form of limited savings.

Overall, 20.5% of the clients indicated that a job was the main source of income for their households for the previous month. Other sources of income are as follows:

- For 0.8% of all clients, welfare assistance from the government such as TANF and GA was the main source of household income.
- For 57.1% of all clients, other government assistance such as social security or unemployment compensation was the main source of household income.
- For 6.7% of all clients, income came mainly from nongovernment, nonjob sources, such as pension and child support.

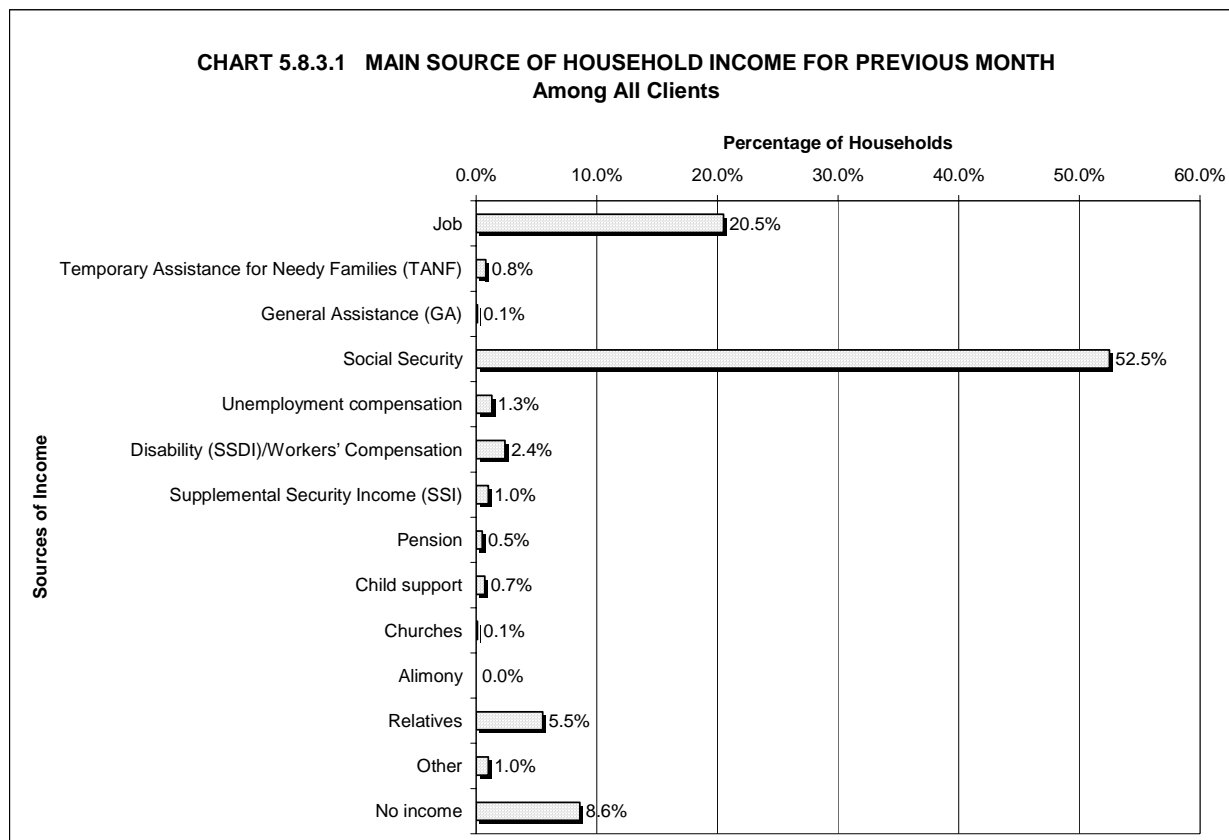


TABLE 5.8.3.2

## ALL SOURCES OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR PREVIOUS MONTH

All Sources of Household Income for Previous Month <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Job	28.0%	56.6%	n.p.	30.5%
Government welfare assistance				
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	3.3%	2.0%	n.p.	3.1%
General Assistance (GA) <sup>b</sup>	0.9%	0.3%	n.p.	1.2%
Other government sources				
Social Security	69.4%	51.7%	n.p.	67.2%
Unemployment compensation	2.2%	0.0%	n.p.	2.3%
Disability (SSDI)/Workers' Compensation	2.1%	16.1%	n.p.	3.2%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	10.6%	24.1%	n.p.	11.6%
Government assistance with child care costs	1.8%	0.0%	n.p.	1.6%
Nongovernment, nonjob sources				
Pension	9.9%	1.6%	n.p.	9.1%
Child support	1.5%	0.0%	n.p.	1.3%
Alimony	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
Relatives	17.6%	13.2%	n.p.	17.3%
No income	9.2%	4.3%	n.p.	8.6%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on all responses to questions 6, 25, and 29 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table, unlike those in most other tables, were calculated without leaving out item nonresponses (labeled "unknown"). To ensure that key percentages, such as that for no income, appear consistent within this table and across related tables, a constant denominator, which includes item nonresponses, was used. All responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients or households of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

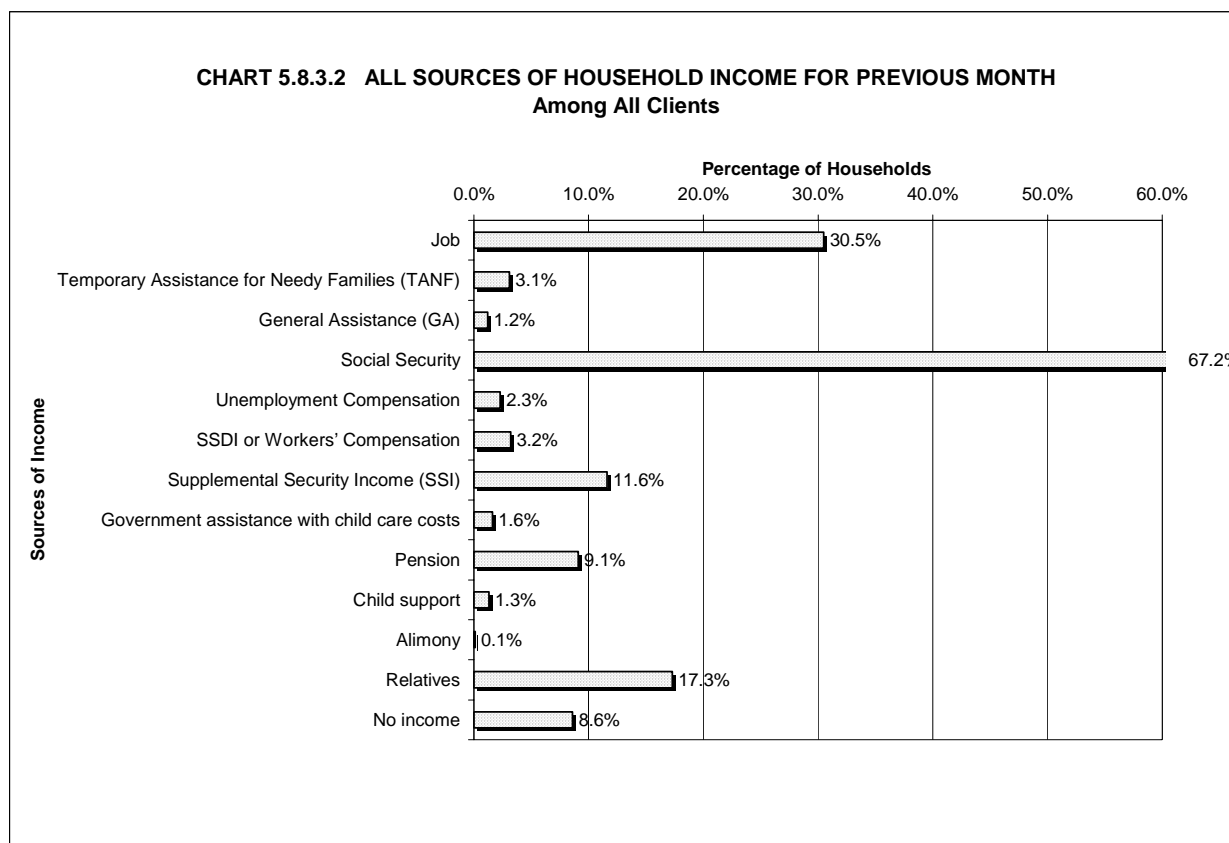
Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.3% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.7% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>Estimates for GA and TANF should be used with caution, since some respondents may not have understood the names of the programs under which they were receiving benefits. Indeed, in some states, the regular GA program is not offered, although other sources of assistance are sometimes available and could have been confused with GA. States where GA is not available include but are not limited to Georgia, Michigan, and Oklahoma.

When clients were asked about *all* sources of their household income for the previous month, 30.5% included a job as a source.

- For 3.1% of all clients, TANF was a source of household income during the previous month.
- For 1.2%, GA was a source of household income.
- 67.2% of all clients said they received social security benefits
- 3.2% chose SSDI or workers' compensation as a source of household income.
- 11.6% mentioned SSI as a source.
- In addition, 9.1%, 1.3%, and 17.3% of the clients indicate pension, child support, and their relatives, respectively, as a source of income.



### 5.8.4 Annual Household Income in 2004

Clients also provided estimates of their total household income in the year 2004. Table 5.8.4.1 shows their annual income in dollars and as a percentage of the federal poverty level.

TABLE 5.8.4.1  
HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR 2004

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Total annual income				
No income	9.5%	17.9%	n.p.	10.2%
\$1-\$4,999	9.5%	20.5%	n.p.	10.8%
\$5,000-\$9,999	34.8%	36.5%	n.p.	34.8%
\$10,000-\$14,999	18.4%	5.8%	n.p.	17.3%
\$15,000-\$19,999	17.8%	0.3%	n.p.	16.0%
\$20,000-\$24,999	6.4%	12.7%	n.p.	7.2%
\$25,000-\$29,999	1.3%	0.0%	n.p.	1.2%
\$30,000-\$34,999	0.4%	0.0%	n.p.	0.4%
\$35,000-\$39,999	0.1%	1.7%	n.p.	0.3%
\$40,000-\$44,999	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
\$45,000-\$49,999	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
\$50,000 and over	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
Unknown	1.6%	4.6%	n.p.	1.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Average annual income among valid responses (in dollars) <sup>a</sup>	10,200	7,490	n.p.	9,970
Median annual income among valid responses (in dollars)	9,070	5,040	n.p.	9,000
Income as a percentage of the federal poverty level <sup>b</sup>				
0% (no income) <sup>c</sup>	9.5%	17.9%	n.p.	10.2%
1%-50%	15.5%	35.6%	n.p.	17.6%
51%-75%	28.8%	11.4%	n.p.	27.1%
76%-100%	19.2%	14.3%	n.p.	18.5%
101%-130%	7.5%	1.4%	n.p.	6.9%
131%-150%	7.5%	0.0%	n.p.	7.0%
151%-185%	10.1%	0.1%	n.p.	9.0%
186% or higher	0.2%	14.4%	n.p.	1.8%
Unknown	1.7%	4.9%	n.p.	2.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%

TABLE 5.8.4.1 (*continued*)

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Average annual income as percentage of the poverty level among valid responses	78%	66%	n.p.	78%
Median annual income as percentage of the poverty level among valid responses	70%	31%	n.p.	70%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on all responses to questions 29 and 31 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table, unlike those in most other tables, were calculated without leaving out item nonresponses (labeled “unknown”). To ensure that key percentages, such as that for no income, appear consistent within this table, a constant denominator, which includes item nonresponses, was used. All responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients or households of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

For total annual income, missing, don’t know, and refusal responses combined are 1.6% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, n.p. for shelter clients, and 1.9% for all clients. The missing rates we report here were obtained after we cross-imputed missing responses for monthly and yearly income variables.

For income as percentage of the federal poverty level, missing, don’t know, and refusal responses combined are 1.7% for pantry clients, 4.9% for kitchen clients, n.p. for shelter clients, and 2.0% for all clients.

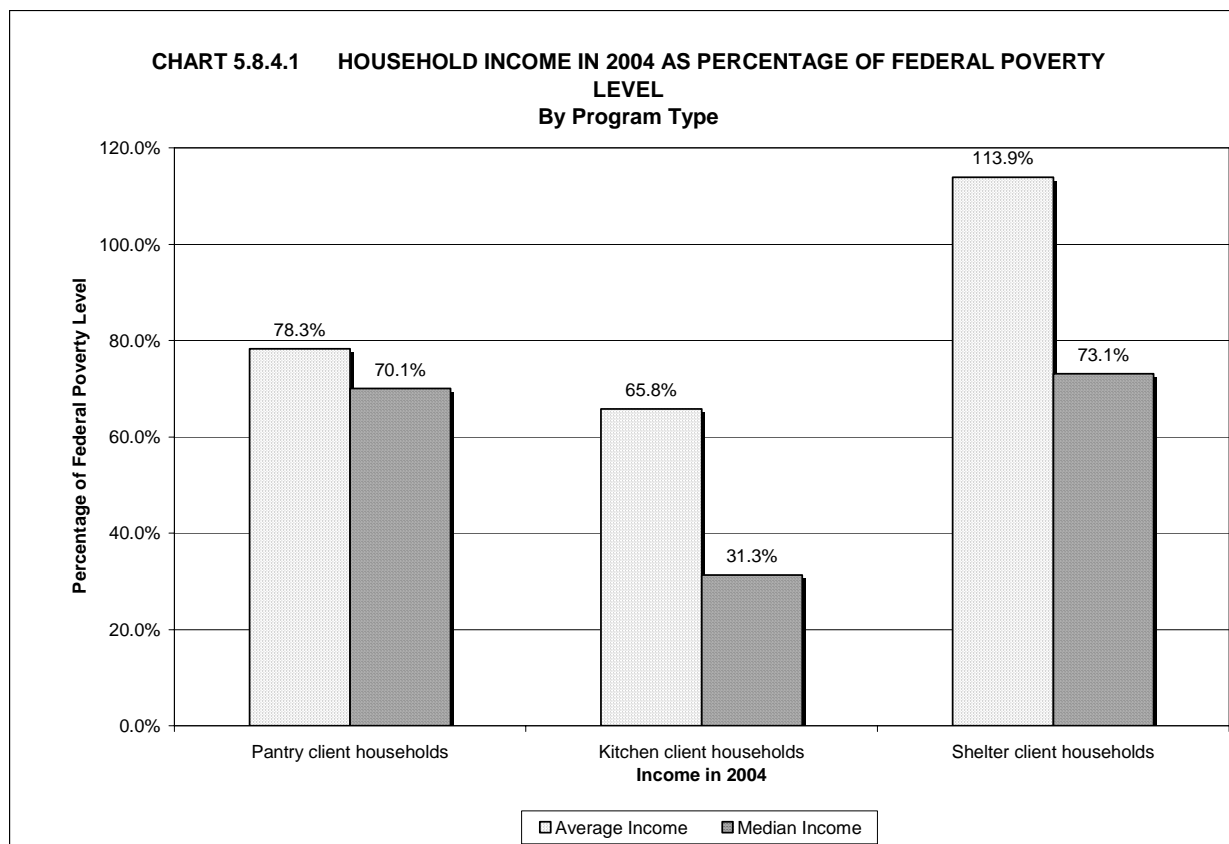
<sup>a</sup>For the calculation of the average and the median, responses given as a range were recoded to be the midpoint of the bracket.

<sup>b</sup>See Table 5.8.1.1 for the federal poverty levels.

<sup>c</sup>The percentages in this row may not be equal to those in the corresponding row of the upper panel of this table, because the two panels of data may have different item nonresponse rates. The calculation in the lower panel required information about household size as well as household income.

In the year 2004, 55.8% of all clients had a household income less than \$10,000. More information about annual income of client households follows:

- Average household income among all clients in year 2004 was \$9,970.
- 80.2% of the clients’ households had an income of 130% or below the federal poverty level.
- Average household income as percentage of the federal poverty level was 78% (median: 70%).





## 5.9 HOUSING

### 5.9.1 Housing Status

Table 5.9.1.1 shows the housing status of the client households. It shows whether they have a place to live, what kind of housing they have, whether they own or rent, and what their other housing-related experiences have been.

TABLE 5.9.1.1  
HOUSING STATUS

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
The kind of place you live now?				
Clients with a place to live				
House	79.7%	63.9%	n.p.	77.1%
Mobile home/trailer	4.4%	17.9%	n.p.	5.5%
Apartment	10.8%	6.1%	n.p.	11.0%
Room	0.6%	0.2%	n.p.	0.9%
Live with family, friends	0.8%	0.5%	n.p.	1.1%
SUBTOTAL	96.4%	88.6%	n.p.	95.7%
Clients without a place to live				
Homeless, living in shelter or mission	3.1%	8.1%	n.p.	3.6%
Homeless, living on the street	0.1%	0.3%	n.p.	0.2%
Car, van, or recreational vehicle	0.3%	3.0%	n.p.	0.5%
Abandoned building	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
SUBTOTAL	3.6%	11.4%	n.p.	4.3%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>
Among clients who have a place to live				
Own the place you live	61.3%	61.3%	n.p.	60.4%
Rent your place	24.7%	28.3%	n.p.	25.5%
Live free with someone else	13.1%	10.0%	n.p.	13.3%
Other <sup>a</sup>	0.9%	0.3%	n.p.	0.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Clients late paying the last month's rent or mortgage				
	11.7%	20.0%	n.p.	13.2%

TABLE 5.9.1.1 (*continued*)

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Clients whose households receive Section 8 or Public Housing Assistance	2.0%	0.1%	n.p.	1.8%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients with a place to live</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>477</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 16, 17, 18, and 81 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For the kind of place where living, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 4.9% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 4.8% for all clients.

For those with a place to live, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.5% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.9% for all clients.

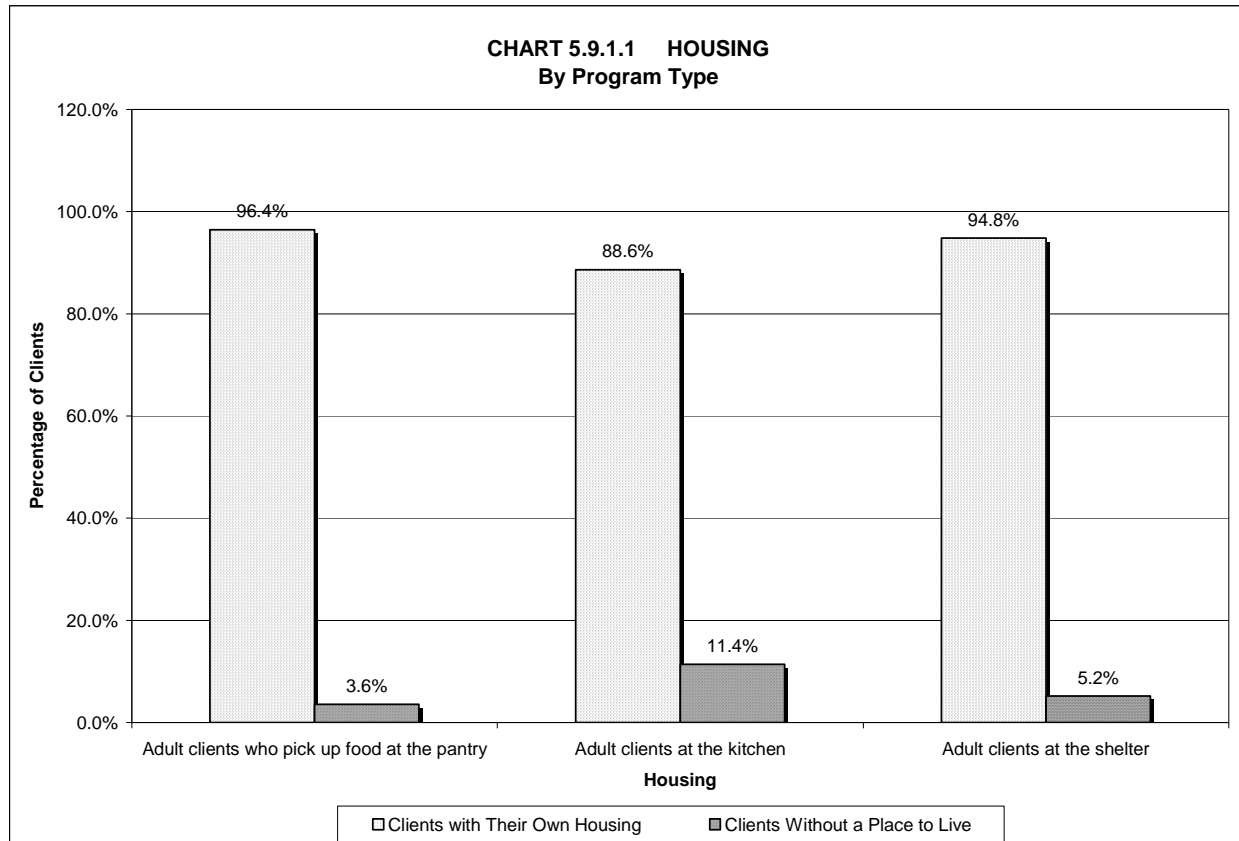
For those late paying rent or mortgage, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 5.3% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 5.1% for all clients.

For those receiving Section 8, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 1.1% for pantry clients, 7.1% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 1.6% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>This includes "working for rent" and halfway houses.

Among all client households, 4.3% were without a place to live. More details on housing status of the clients follow:

- n.p. of shelter client households were homeless.
- 11.4% of kitchen client households were homeless.
- 3.6% of pantry client households were homeless.
- 61.3% of pantry client households own the place where they live.
- 13.2% of the client households with a place to live were late paying the previous month's rent or mortgage.
- 1.8% of the client households with a place to live said they received Section 8 or Public Housing Assistance at the time of the interview.



## 5.9.2 Household Resources

Clients indicated whether their households have access to a kitchen, a working telephone, or a working car. Responses are presented in Table 5.9.2.1.

TABLE 5.9.2.1  
HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES

Household Resources	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Clients with access to a place where they can prepare a meal				
Yes	96.7%	93.7%	n.p.	96.1%
No	3.3%	6.3%	n.p.	3.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Clients have access to a working telephone				
Yes	84.4%	73.1%	n.p.	83.3%
No	15.6%	26.9%	n.p.	16.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Clients have access to a working car				
Yes	68.2%	55.7%	n.p.	66.6%
No	31.8%	44.3%	n.p.	33.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 19 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

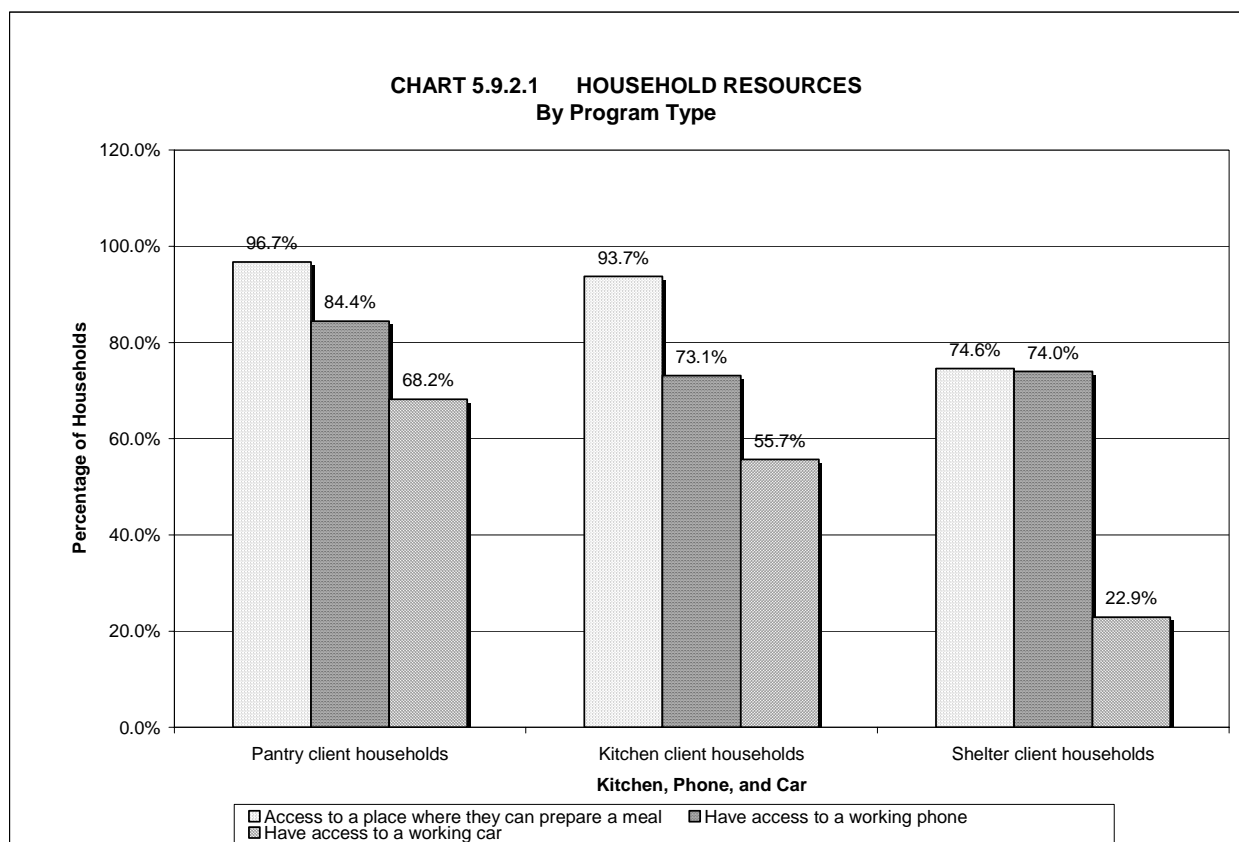
For access to a place, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.1% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.5% for all clients.

For working telephone, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.1% for pantry clients, 12.2% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 1.2% for all clients.

For clients with working cars, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.1% for pantry clients, 12.2% for kitchen clients, 5.3% for shelter clients, and 1.2% for all clients.

Findings about selected household resources presented in Table 5.9.2.1 include:

- Overall, 96.1% of the clients have access to a place where they can prepare a meal.
  - 96.7% of the pantry clients have access to such a place.
  - 93.7% of the kitchen clients have access to such a place.
  - n.p. of the shelter clients have access to such a place.
- Overall, 83.3% of the clients have access to a working telephone.
  - 84.4% of the pantry clients have access to a working telephone.
  - 73.1% of the kitchen clients have access to a working telephone.
  - n.p. of the shelter clients have access to a working telephone.
- Overall, 66.6% of the clients have access to a working car.
  - 68.2% of the pantry clients have access to a working car.
  - 55.7% of the kitchen clients have access to a working car.
  - n.p. of the shelter clients have access to a working car.





## 6. CLIENTS: FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER

Food insecurity is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that varies along a continuum of successive stages as it becomes more severe. A scaling tool developed by the USDA provides an important approach being used increasingly to assess food security and hunger among households. Six questions in a six-item short module, the minimal information required to construct the scale, were included in the client survey.<sup>15</sup> Food security and food insecurity are conceptually defined as the following<sup>16</sup>:

- Food security: “Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).”
- Food insecurity: “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”

This chapter begins by assessing A2H clients’ levels of food security, first for all households and then separately for households with children and for households with elderly members. Subsequent sections then provide data on household responses to the specific questions used in constructing the food security scores.

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<sup>15</sup> Bickel, Gary, Mark Nord, Cristofer Price, William Hamilton, and John Cook. “Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, March 2000.

<sup>16</sup> “Core Indicators of Nutritional State for Difficult-to-Sample Populations.” *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 120, no.11S, November 1990.

## 6.1 HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY

Clients responded to a six-item short module for classifying households by food security status level. Food security scale scores were assigned to households according to the “Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000.”<sup>17</sup>

TABLE 6.1.1  
HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY

Food Security Among Clients’ Households	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Food security among all households				
Food secure	71.6%	47.9%	n.p.	69.1%
Food insecure				
Food insecure without hunger	20.5%	36.9%	n.p.	22.1%
Food insecure with hunger	7.9%	15.2%	n.p.	8.8%
SUBTOTAL	28.4%	52.1%	n.p.	30.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>
Food security among households with children younger than age 18				
Food secure	28.5%	n.p.	n.p.	27.4%
Food Insecure				
Food insecure without hunger	54.6%	n.p.	n.p.	54.8%
Food insecure with hunger	16.9%	n.p.	n.p.	17.8%
SUBTOTAL	71.5%	n.p.	n.p.	72.6%
TOTAL	100.0%	n.p.	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Households with children younger than age 18</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>242</b>
Food security among households with seniors age 65 or older				
Food secure	86.1%	49.5%	n.p.	82.3%
Food insecure				
Food insecure without hunger	11.8%	39.8%	n.p.	14.9%
Food insecure with hunger	2.1%	10.7%	n.p.	2.8%
SUBTOTAL	13.9%	50.5%	n.p.	17.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%

<sup>17</sup> Bickel et al. March 2000.



TABLE 6.1.1 (*continued*)

Food Security Among Clients' Households	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Households with seniors age 65 years or older</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>184</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 42, 43, 44, 44a, 45, and 46 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Constructed according to "Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000."

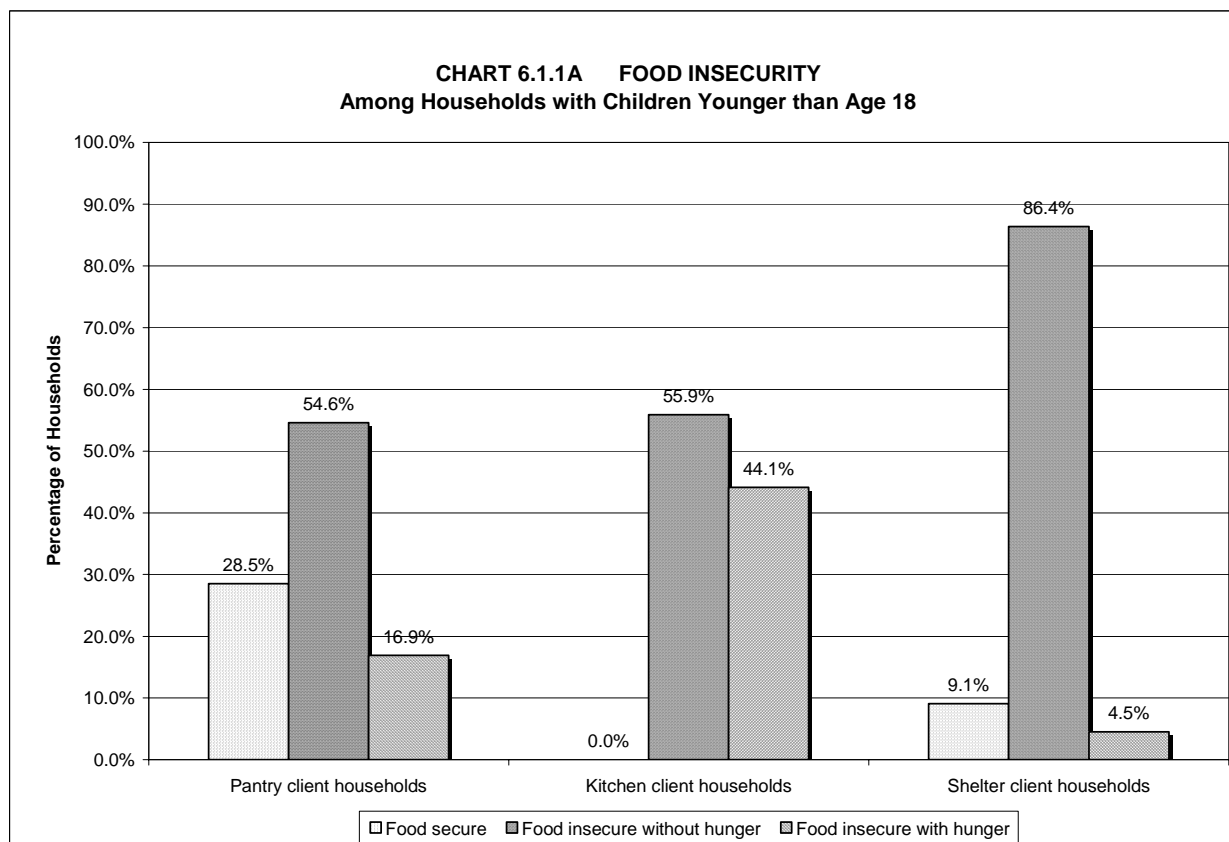
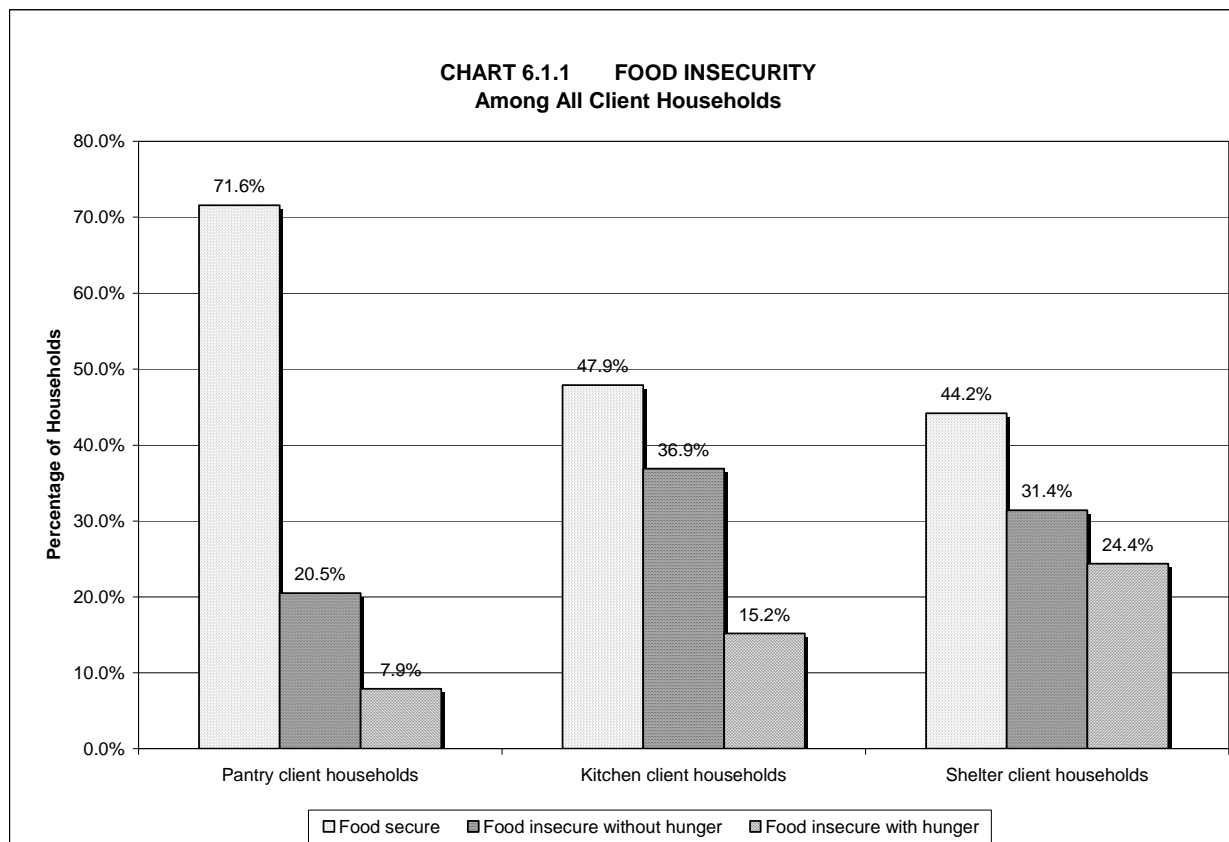
For all households, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.5% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 1.5% for shelter clients, and 0.8% for all clients.

For households with children younger than age 18, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.6% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.6% for all clients.

For households with seniors, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.0% for pantry clients, 1.1% for kitchen clients, 2.7% for shelter clients, and 0.1% for all clients.

According to the six-item short module, 22.1% of all client households of the emergency food programs were food insecure without hunger. Another 8.8% were food insecure with hunger. Combined, a total of 30.9% were food insecure.

- Among the client households with children younger than age 18, 54.8% were food insecure without hunger and 17.8% were food insecure with hunger.
- Among the client households with seniors age 65 years or older, 14.9% were food insecure without hunger and 2.8% were food insecure with hunger.



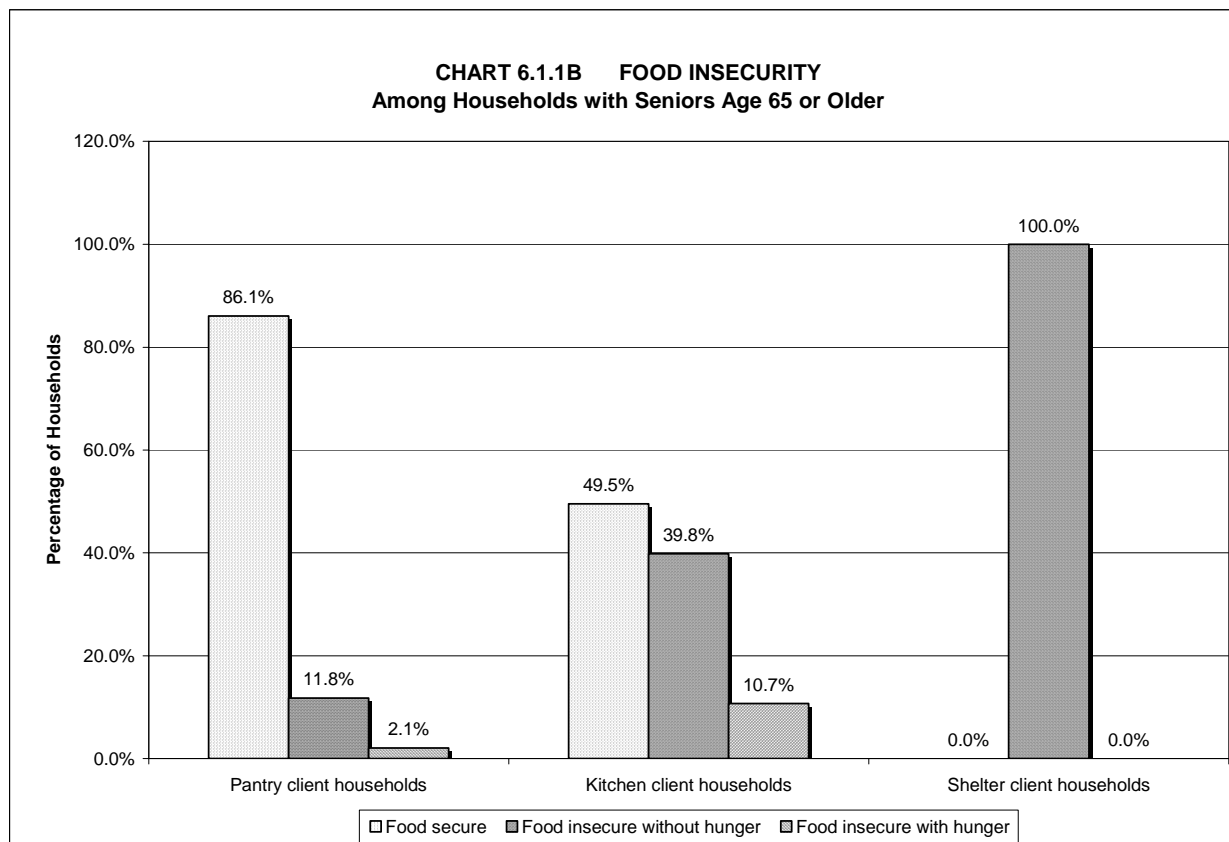


TABLE 6.1.2

## FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND FOOD SECURITY

Food Security Among Clients' Households	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Food Stamp Program participants				
Food secure	22.2%	n.p.	n.p.	26.5%
Food insecure				
Food insecure without hunger	61.2%	n.p.	n.p.	57.9%
Food insecure with hunger	16.6%	n.p.	n.p.	15.6%
SUBTOTAL	77.8%	n.p.	n.p.	73.5%
TOTAL	100.0%	n.p.	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Food Stamp Program participants</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>189</b>
Food Stamp Program nonparticipants				
Food secure	78.4%	56.0%	n.p.	76.6%
Food Insecure				
Food insecure without hunger	14.9%	26.6%	n.p.	15.8%
Food insecure with hunger	6.7%	17.4%	n.p.	7.6%
SUBTOTAL	21.6%	44.0%	n.p.	23.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Food Stamp Program nonparticipants</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>325</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 42, 43, 44, 44a, 45, and 46 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Constructed according to "Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000."

For participating households, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.0% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.0% for all clients.

For nonparticipating households with seniors, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.5% for pantry clients, 8.1% for kitchen clients, 1.5% for shelter clients, and 1.0% for all clients.

As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7 below, about 14.8% of client households also receive benefits from the Food Stamp Program. Table 6.1.2 compares food security status among Food Stamp Program participants to that of nonparticipants.

- 57.9% of the client household receiving food stamps were food insecure without hunger. Another 15.6% were food insecure with hunger.
- In comparison, among the client households not receiving food stamps, 15.8% were food insecure without hunger, and 7.6% were food insecure with hunger.

## 6.2 INDICATORS OF FOOD INSECURITY IN HOUSEHOLDS

Table 6.2.1 presents responses to two of the questions involved in the six-item short module.

TABLE 6.2.1  
INDICATORS OF FOOD INSECURITY IN HOUSEHOLDS

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
<i>“The food we bought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more.” In the last 12 months, was that...?</i>				
Often true	9.5%	22.0%	n.p.	10.5%
Sometimes true	18.5%	24.0%	n.p.	19.5%
Never true	72.0%	54.0%	n.p.	70.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<i>“We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” In the last 12 months, was that...?</i>				
Often true	9.8%	17.7%	n.p.	10.4%
Sometimes true	22.8%	27.6%	n.p.	23.7%
Never true	67.3%	54.8%	n.p.	65.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 42 and 43 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don’t know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For food didn’t last, missing, don’t know, and refusal responses combined are 0.8% for pantry clients, 5.2% for kitchen clients, 1.5% for shelter clients, and 1.2% for all clients.

For not eating balanced meals, missing, don’t know, and refusal responses combined are 0.7% for pantry clients, 4.8% for kitchen clients, 1.5% for shelter clients, and 1.0% for all clients.

Overall, 30.0% of the client households reported that, during the previous 12 months, they had been in a situation where the food they bought “just didn’t last and they didn’t have

money to get more.” In addition, 34.1% of the client households were, often or sometimes during the previous 12 months, in a situation where they “couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.”

### 6.3 INDICATORS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER AMONG ADULTS

Table 6.3.1 presents responses to the four questions about adults in the six-item short module.

TABLE 6.3.1  
INDICATORS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER AMONG ADULTS

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
How often adult clients or other adults in the household cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food for the previous 12 months <sup>a</sup>				
Almost every month	6.5%	24.4%	n.p.	8.0%
Some months but not every month	5.9%	4.1%	n.p.	5.7%
Only one or two months	0.7%	0.0%	n.p.	0.6%
Never	86.9%	71.5%	n.p.	85.7%
Clients who ate less than they felt they should because there wasn't enough money to buy food for the previous 12 months				
Yes	14.5%	30.5%	n.p.	16.5%
No	85.5%	69.5%	n.p.	83.5%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Clients who were hungry but didn't eat because they couldn't afford enough food for the previous 12 months				
Yes	11.5%	17.2%	n.p.	12.3%
No	88.5%	82.8%	n.p.	87.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Clients or other adults in the household ever did not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food				
Yes	8.1%	10.6%	n.p.	8.6%
No	91.9%	89.4%	n.p.	91.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 44a, 45, 46, and 47 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the



TABLE 6.3.1 (*continued*)

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Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For cutting meal size, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.5% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.9% for all clients.

For eating less, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 2.8% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 6.8% for shelter clients, and 3.0% for all clients.

For being hungry because could not afford food, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 2.1% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 6.8% for shelter clients, and 2.4% for all clients.

For not eating for a whole day, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 1.7% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 6.8% for shelter clients, and 2.1% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>Responses may not add up to 100% because this panel was constructed from two questions: "Never" came from Question 44, and the other responses from Question 44a.

Adults in 8.0% of the client households had to cut the size of meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food *almost every month* of the previous 12 months. Responses to the remaining three questions are:

- 16.5% of the clients ate less than they felt they should because there was not enough money to buy food during the previous 12 months.
- Adults in 12.3% of the client households were hungry but did not eat because they could not afford enough food during the previous 12 months.
- Adults in 8.6% of the client households did not eat for a whole day at least once during the previous 12 months because there was not enough money for food.

## 6.4 INDICATORS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER AMONG CHILDREN

In addition to the six questions shown in tables 6.2.1 and 6.3.1, clients were asked three additional questions about their children's skipping meals, being hungry, and not eating enough.

TABLE 6.4.1

### INDICATORS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER AMONG CHILDREN

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
How often during the previous 12 months clients' child/children was/were not eating enough because they just couldn't afford enough food				
Often	8.3%	n.p.	n.p.	7.9%
Sometimes	38.7%	n.p.	n.p.	38.9%
Never	53.0%	n.p.	n.p.	53.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	n.p.	n.p.	100.0%
Clients whose child/children ever skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food during the previous 12 months				
Yes	15.7%	n.p.	n.p.	16.5%
No	84.3%	n.p.	n.p.	83.5%
TOTAL	100.0%	n.p.	n.p.	100.0%
Clients whose child/children was/were hungry at least once during the previous 12 months, but couldn't afford more food				
Yes	17.3%	n.p.	n.p.	16.8%
No	82.7%	n.p.	n.p.	83.2%
TOTAL	100.0%	n.p.	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Households with children younger than age 18</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>242</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 3, 6b, 49, 50, and 51 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

TABLE 6.4.1 (*continued*)

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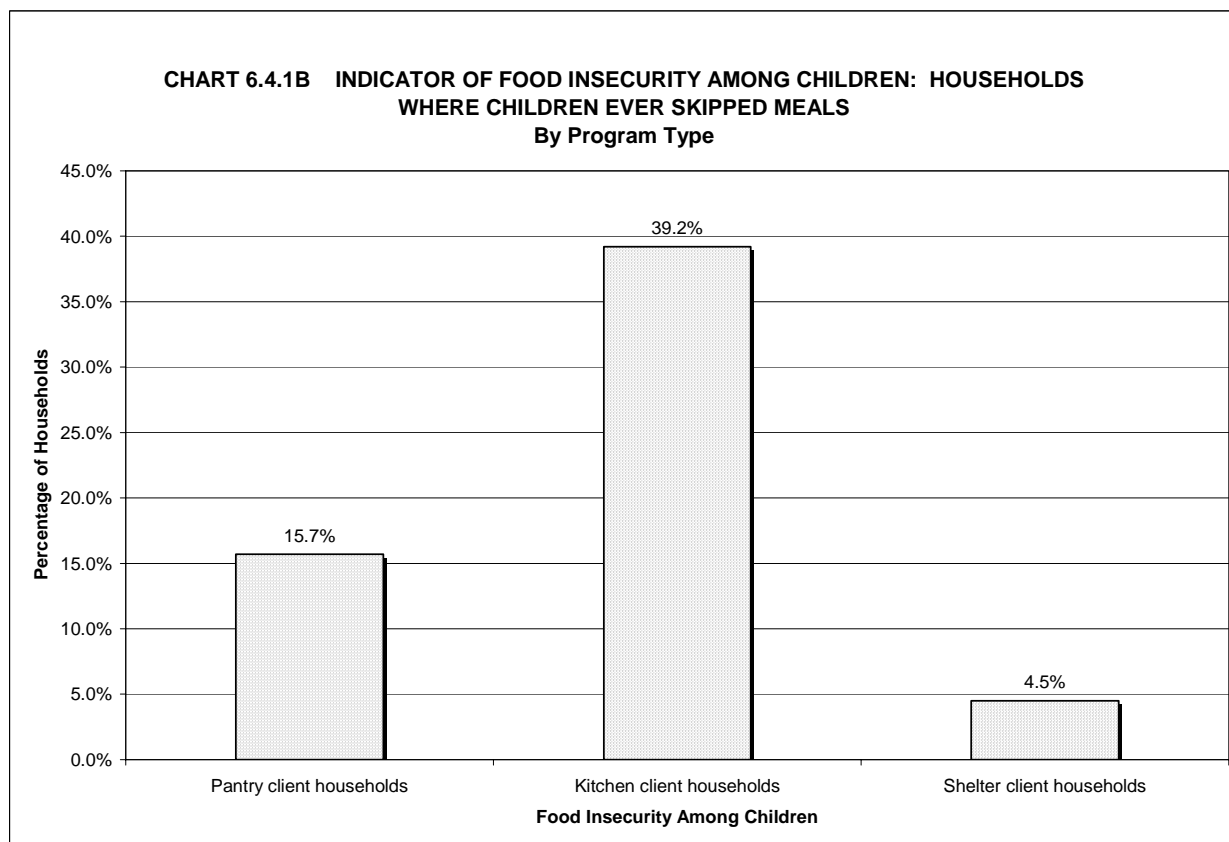
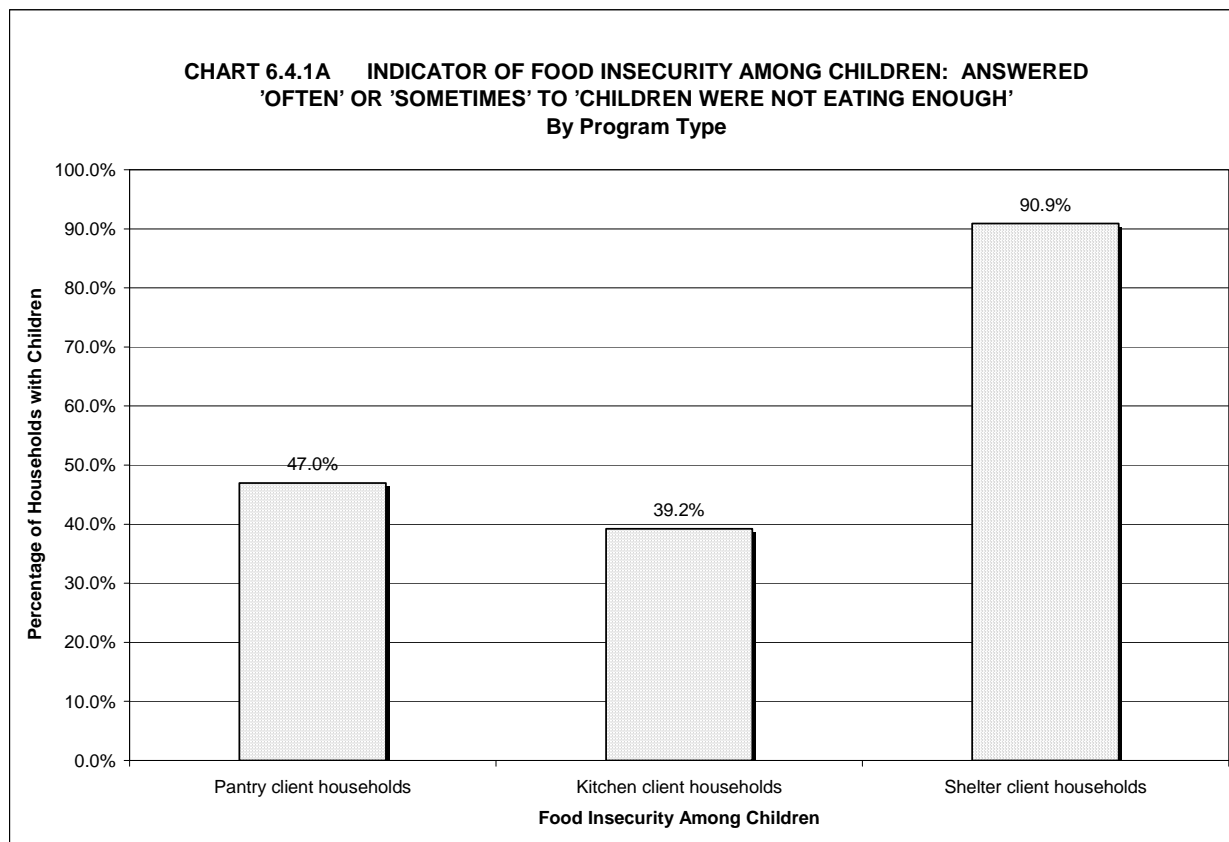
For children not eating enough, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 7.5% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 7.3% for all clients.

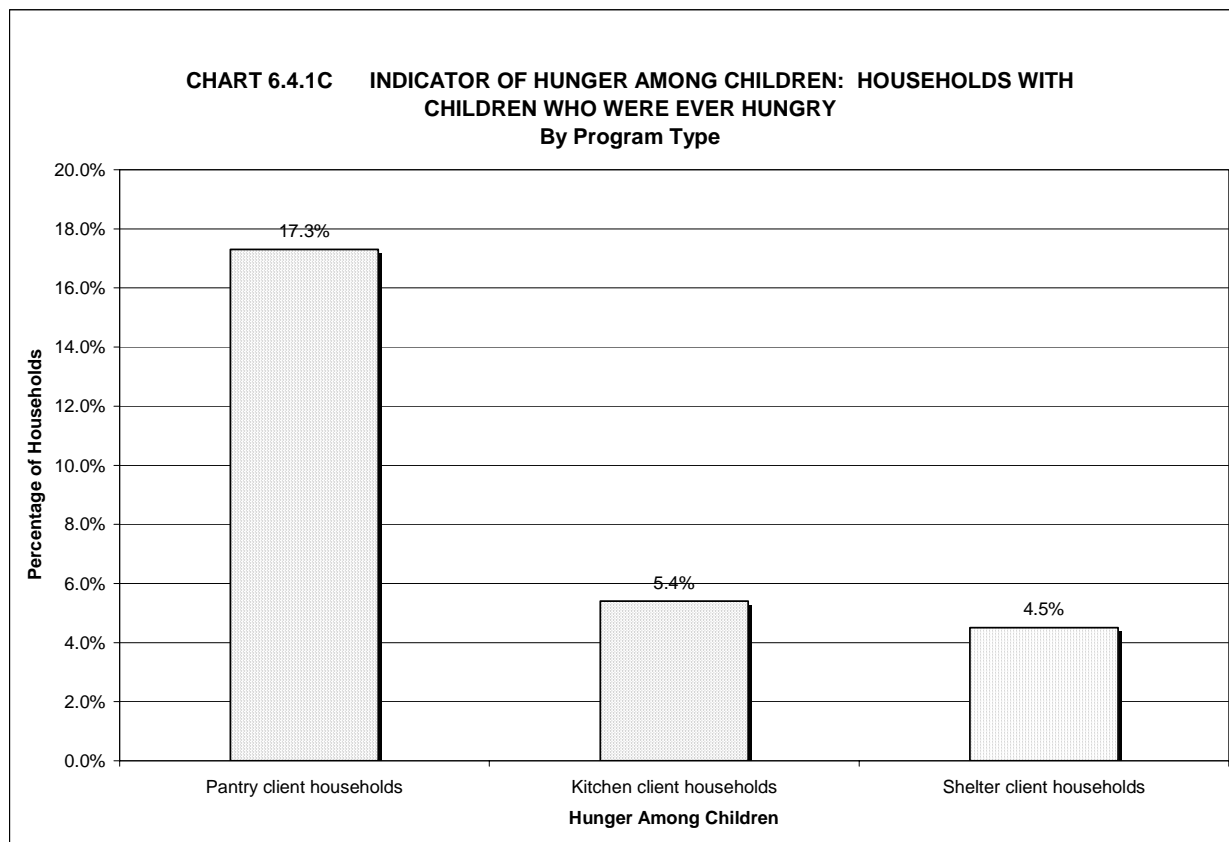
For children skipping meals, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 7.5% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 7.3% for all clients.

For children hungry, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 9.4% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 9.0% for all clients.

Among all clients with children, 7.9% stated that, during the previous 12 months, their children were *often* not eating enough because they just couldn't afford enough food. Another 38.9% of the clients experienced such a situation *sometimes* during the previous 12 months.

- 16.5% of the clients with children said that their children skipped meals because there was not enough money for food during the previous 12 months.
- 16.8% of the clients with children said that their children were hungry at least once during the previous 12 months, but they could not afford more food.





## 6.5 CHOICE BETWEEN FOOD AND NECESSITIES

Clients were asked whether their families had to choose between food and necessities during the 12-month period prior to the interview. Table 6.5.1 summarizes the results.

TABLE 6.5.1  
CHOICE BETWEEN FOOD AND NECESSITIES

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
In the previous 12 months, clients or their family who ever had to choose at least once between				
Paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel	17.6%	49.7%	n.p.	20.3%
Paying for food and paying for rent or mortgage	14.1%	47.2%	n.p.	17.0%
Paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care	16.7%	46.6%	n.p.	19.3%
Households with all three situations	10.0%	40.6%	n.p.	12.7%
Households with two, but not three, of the situations	6.3%	5.9%	n.p.	6.2%
Households with just one of the situations	5.7%	9.5%	n.p.	6.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 52 of the client survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For choosing between food and utilities, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.3% for pantry clients, 5.1% for kitchen clients, 22.8% for shelter clients, and 1.0% for all clients.

For choosing between food and rent (mortgage), missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.4% for pantry clients, 4.7% for kitchen clients, 22.8% for shelter clients, and 1.2% for all clients.

For choosing between food and medical care, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.3% for pantry clients, 5.0% for kitchen clients, 22.8% for shelter clients, and 1.0% for all clients.

For number of situations, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.3% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 22.8% for shelter clients, and 1.0% for all clients.

As shown in Table 6.5.1, among pantry client households, 17.6% had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating; 14.1% had to choose between food and rent or mortgage; and 16.7% had to choose between food and medicine or medical care. Results for kitchen and shelter client households are:

- Among kitchen client households, 49.7% had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating; 47.2% between food and rent or mortgage; and 46.6% between food and medicine or medical care.
- Among shelter client households, n.p. had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating; n.p. between food and rent or mortgage; and n.p. between food and medicine or medical care.





## 7. CLIENTS: USE OF FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Given the high levels of need evidenced by many clients in the A2H network, it is important to assess whether the clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley are getting all the governmental nutrition assistance they are entitled to. This issue is examined here. The analysis begins by examining client participation in the Food Stamp Program, since it is the largest and most widely available government nutrition assistance program. Both levels of participation and reasons for non-participation are examined. A subsequent section examines participation in other government nutrition programs.

### 7.1 USE OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Clients were asked a series of questions relating to the Food Stamp Program. Table 7.1.1 summarizes the findings.

TABLE 7.1.1  
USE OF FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Participation in Food Stamp Program	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Client or anyone in the household had applied for food stamps	16.7%	75.9%	n.p.	21.6%
Client or anyone in the household currently receiving food stamps	12.1%	43.8%	n.p.	14.8%
Client or anyone in the household currently not receiving but received food stamps during the previous 12 months	2.2%	1.4%	n.p.	2.1%
Client or anyone in the household had applied for but had not received food stamps during the previous 12 months	2.0%	17.8%	n.p.	3.1%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

TABLE 7.1.1 (*continued*)

Participation in Food Stamp Program	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Number of weeks clients or their households have currently been receiving food stamps (for those who are receiving)				
Less than 2 weeks	0.5%	n.p.	n.p.	0.5%
2-4 weeks	2.2%	n.p.	n.p.	3.8%
5-12 weeks	5.5%	n.p.	n.p.	4.4%
13-51 weeks	16.8%	n.p.	n.p.	12.6%
1-2 years (52-103 weeks)	8.4%	n.p.	n.p.	21.9%
2-4 years (104-207 weeks)	29.6%	n.p.	n.p.	24.7%
4 years or more	37.1%	n.p.	n.p.	32.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	n.p.	n.p.	100.0%
Average number of weeks clients or their households have currently been receiving food stamps	243.5	n.p.	n.p.	213.0
Median number of weeks clients or their households have currently been receiving food stamps	104	n.p.	n.p.	104
Number of weeks during which food stamps usually last				
1 week or less	13.8%	n.p.	n.p.	18.2%
2 weeks	34.5%	n.p.	n.p.	28.4%
3 weeks	36.9%	n.p.	n.p.	33.7%
4 weeks	14.9%	n.p.	n.p.	19.6%
More than 4 weeks	0.0%	n.p.	n.p.	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	n.p.	n.p.	100.0%
Average number of weeks during the month over which food stamps usually last	2.5	n.p.	n.p.	2.6
Median number of weeks during the month over which food stamps usually last	3	n.p.	n.p.	3
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients who are currently receiving food stamps</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>189</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 32, 33, 34, 36, and 37 of the client survey.

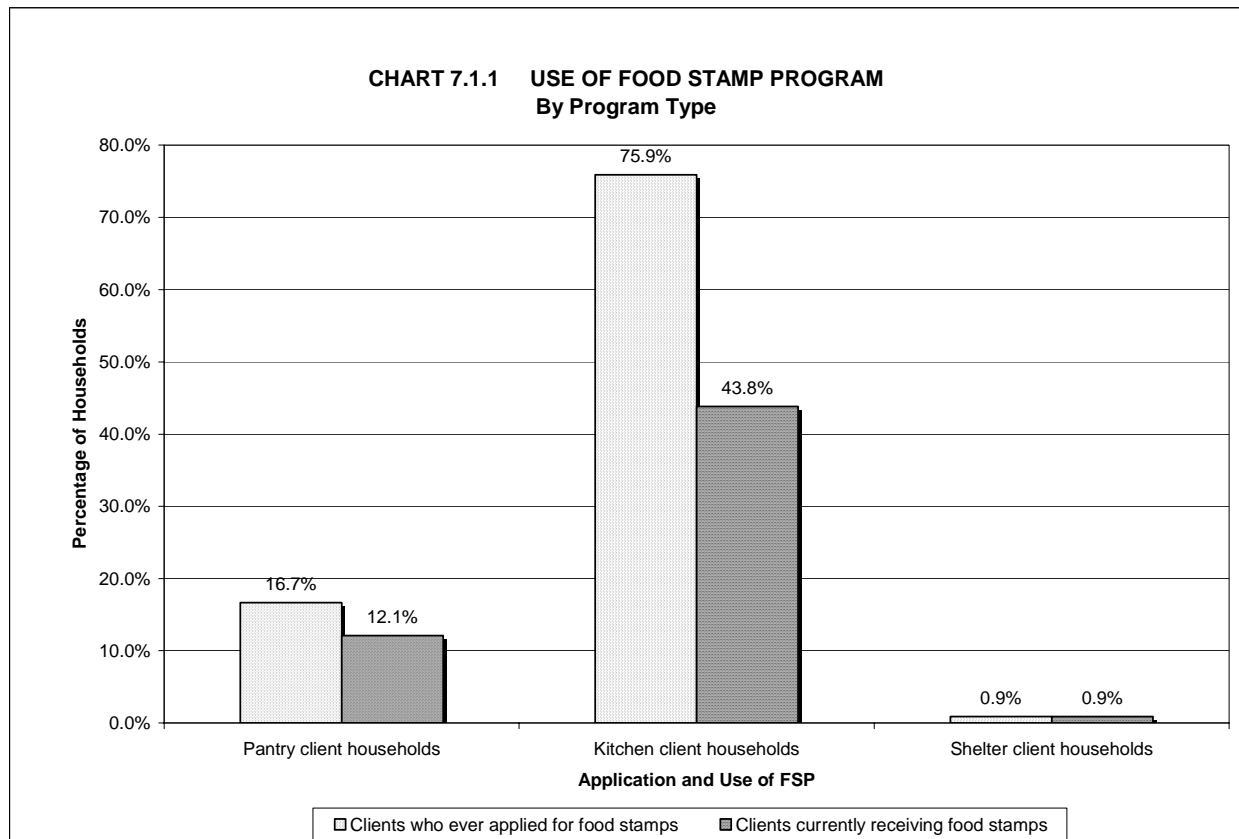
NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

The second, third, and fourth rows of the first panel do not add up exactly to the first row due to varying item nonresponses to the question involved.

TABLE 7.1.1 (*continued*)

For length of receipt of food stamps, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 15.5% for pantry clients, 23.7% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 17.7% for all clients.

For period of time food stamps lasted, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 4.3% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 3.1% for all clients.



Overall, 21.6% of the clients have applied for and 14.8% are currently receiving food stamps. More information includes:

- 56.8% of the clients who are receiving food stamps have been receiving them for more than two years.
- For 80.4% of the clients who are receiving food stamps, the stamps last for three weeks or less.
- On average, food stamps last for 2.6 weeks.

## 7.2 REASONS WHY CLIENTS NEVER APPLIED FOR FOOD STAMPS

Clients who had not applied for food stamps were asked why they or their households never applied for food stamps. Table 7.2.1 shows the results.

TABLE 7.2.1  
REASONS WHY CLIENTS NEVER APPLIED FOR FOOD STAMPS

Reasons Why Clients or Their Households Never Applied for Food Stamps <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
<b>Ineligibility<sup>b</sup></b>				
Don't think eligible because of income or assets				
All clients	48.8%	47.0%	n.p.	47.9%
Clients with income 130% of the federal poverty level or lower	41.5%	46.8%	n.p.	41.0%
Clients with income higher than 130% of the federal poverty level	7.0%	0.1%	n.p.	6.7%
Unknown	0.3%	0.1%	n.p.	0.3%
Don't think eligible because of citizenship status	4.4%	26.4%	n.p.	5.4%
Eligible for only a low benefit amount	7.5%	0.2%	n.p.	7.2%
<b>SUBTOTAL<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>73.6%</b>	<b>n.p.</b>	<b>60.5%</b>
<b>Inconvenience</b>				
Don't know where to go or who to contact to apply	12.5%	11.3%	n.p.	12.2%
Hard to get to the food stamp office	27.4%	0.3%	n.p.	26.2%
Application process is too long and complicated	7.2%	0.0%	n.p.	6.9%
Questions are too personal	0.6%	0.0%	n.p.	0.5%
Food stamp office staff are disrespectful	0.0%	0.2%	n.p.	0.0%
Food stamp office is unpleasant or in unsafe area	0.3%	0.0%	n.p.	0.3%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>n.p.</b>	<b>42.4%</b>
<b>No need</b>				
No need for benefit	12.6%	2.3%	n.p.	12.1%
Others need benefits more	17.4%	5.3%	n.p.	17.5%
Need is only temporary	0.5%	0.0%	n.p.	0.5%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>30.2%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>n.p.</b>	<b>29.8%</b>

TABLE 7.2.1 (*continued*)

Reasons Why Clients or Their Households Never Applied for Food Stamps <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
<b>Social stigma</b>				
Feel embarrassed applying for benefits	0.8%	0.0%	n.p.	0.8%
Family or friends do not approve of my receiving benefits	0.2%	0.2%	n.p.	0.1%
Dislike relying on the government for assistance	0.6%	0.0%	n.p.	1.0%
Feel embarrassed using benefits	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>n.p.</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Other</b>				
Planning to apply, but not yet applied	0.3%	0.0%	n.p.	0.3%
Other <sup>d</sup>	1.3%	4.0%	n.p.	1.3%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients or their households who never applied for food stamps</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>242</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 38 of the client survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.2% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.2% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>See Appendix A for food stamp eligibility criteria.

<sup>c</sup>The subtotal in this table indicates the percentage of people who provided one or more component items as their responses; thus, it may differ from the sum of component items.

<sup>d</sup>This includes working, having no mailing address, and being in a temporary living situation.

Reasons for not having applied for food stamps include:

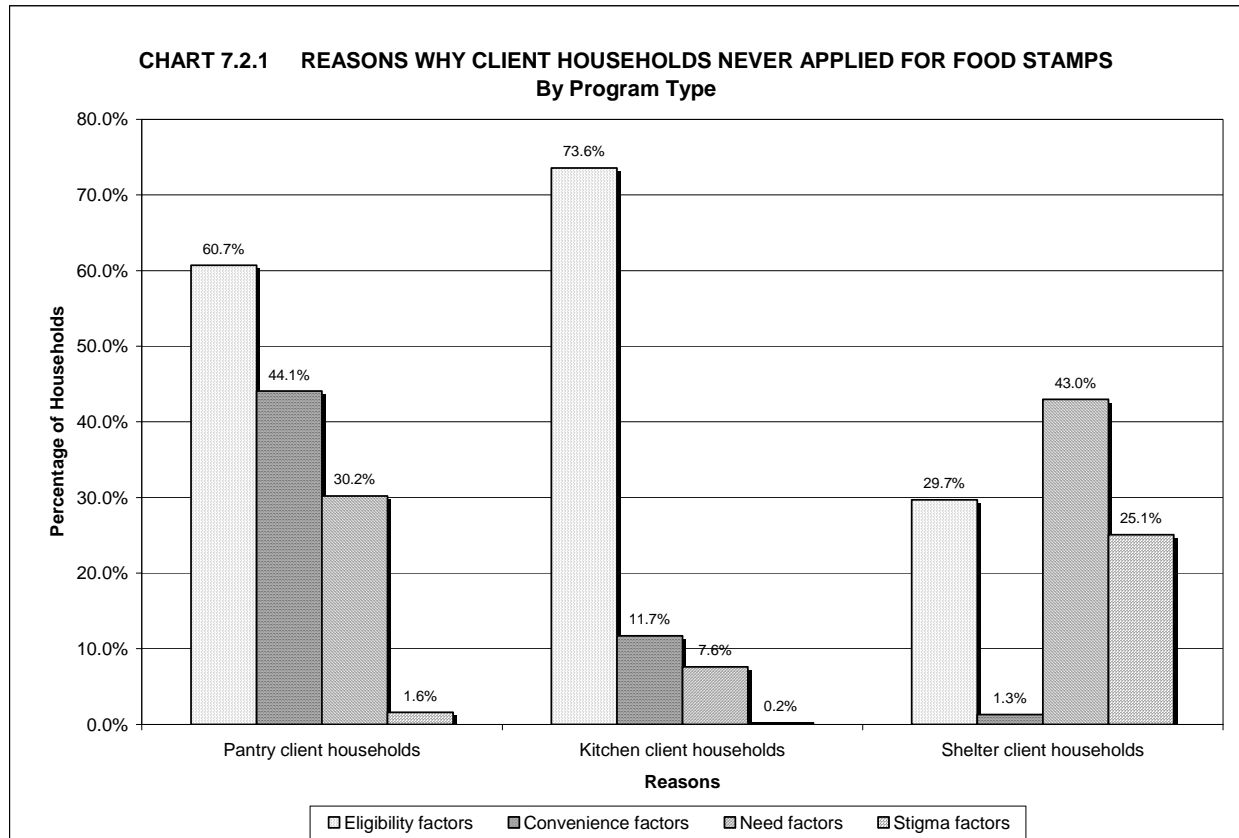
- Overall, 60.5% of the clients who had not applied for food stamps did not do so because they believe they are not eligible or eligible for only a low benefit amount; 42.4% because it is too much hassle; 29.8% either because there is no need or because they think others would need the benefits more; and 2.0% because they associate a social stigma with food stamps.

- 47.9% of the clients indicated income above the eligible level as a reason for having not applied for food stamps.
- That 47.9% was broken down into two categories: those who had an income that is at or below 130% of the federal poverty level (41.0%), and those who had an income that is higher than 130% of the federal poverty level (6.7%).<sup>18,19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Generalizing this result requires caution, as the income data collected through our client survey were not validated.

<sup>19</sup> Broadly speaking, a household usually meets the income eligibility requirements for the Food Stamp Program if its gross income is less than 130% of the poverty level. However, it was not possible during the survey to collect all the detailed data necessary to assess eligibility. See Appendix B for the eligibility criteria.



### 7.3 REASONS WHY CLIENTS OR THEIR HOUSEHOLDS ARE NOT CURRENTLY RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS, FOR THOSE WHO HAVE APPLIED

Clients who have applied but are not currently receiving food stamps were asked why this is so. Results are shown in Table 7.3.1.

TABLE 7.3.1

#### REASONS WHY CLIENTS OR THEIR HOUSEHOLDS ARE NOT CURRENTLY RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS, FOR THOSE WHO HAVE APPLIED

Reasons Why Clients or Their Households Are Not Currently Receiving Food Stamps, for Those Who Have Applied for Food Stamps <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
<b>Ineligibility</b>				
Ineligible income level	42.7%	n.p.	N.A.	57.5%
Change of household makeup	2.9%	n.p.	N.A.	1.6%
Time limit for receiving the help ran out	12.2%	n.p.	N.A.	7.0%
Citizenship status	4.3%	n.p.	N.A.	2.5%
SUBTOTAL <sup>b</sup>	62.1%	n.p.	N.A.	68.6%
<b>Inconvenience</b>				
Too much hassle	6.8%	n.p.	N.A.	4.0%
Hard to get to food stamp office	1.6%	n.p.	N.A.	1.5%
SUBTOTAL	8.3%	n.p.	N.A.	5.3%
<b>No need</b>				
No need for benefits	0.0%	n.p.	N.A.	0.0%
Others need benefits more	5.5%	n.p.	N.A.	3.1%
Need is only temporary	1.7%	n.p.	N.A.	1.0%
SUBTOTAL	7.2%	n.p.	N.A.	4.1%
<b>Other</b>				
Other reasons <sup>c</sup>	20.1%	n.p.	N.A.	14.7%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients who have applied for but are not currently receiving food stamps</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 35 of the client survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.



TABLE 7.3.1 (continued)

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 3.2% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, N.A. for shelter clients, and 1.9% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>The subtotal in this table indicates the percentage of people who provided one or more component items as their responses; thus it may differ from the sum of component items.

<sup>c</sup>This includes "waiting" and "in progress."

Other findings include:

- Overall, 68.6% of the clients believe that they are not receiving food stamps because they are not eligible.
- 5.3% are not receiving food stamps because it is too much hassle.
- 4.1% are not receiving food stamps either because there is no need or because they think others would need the benefits more.

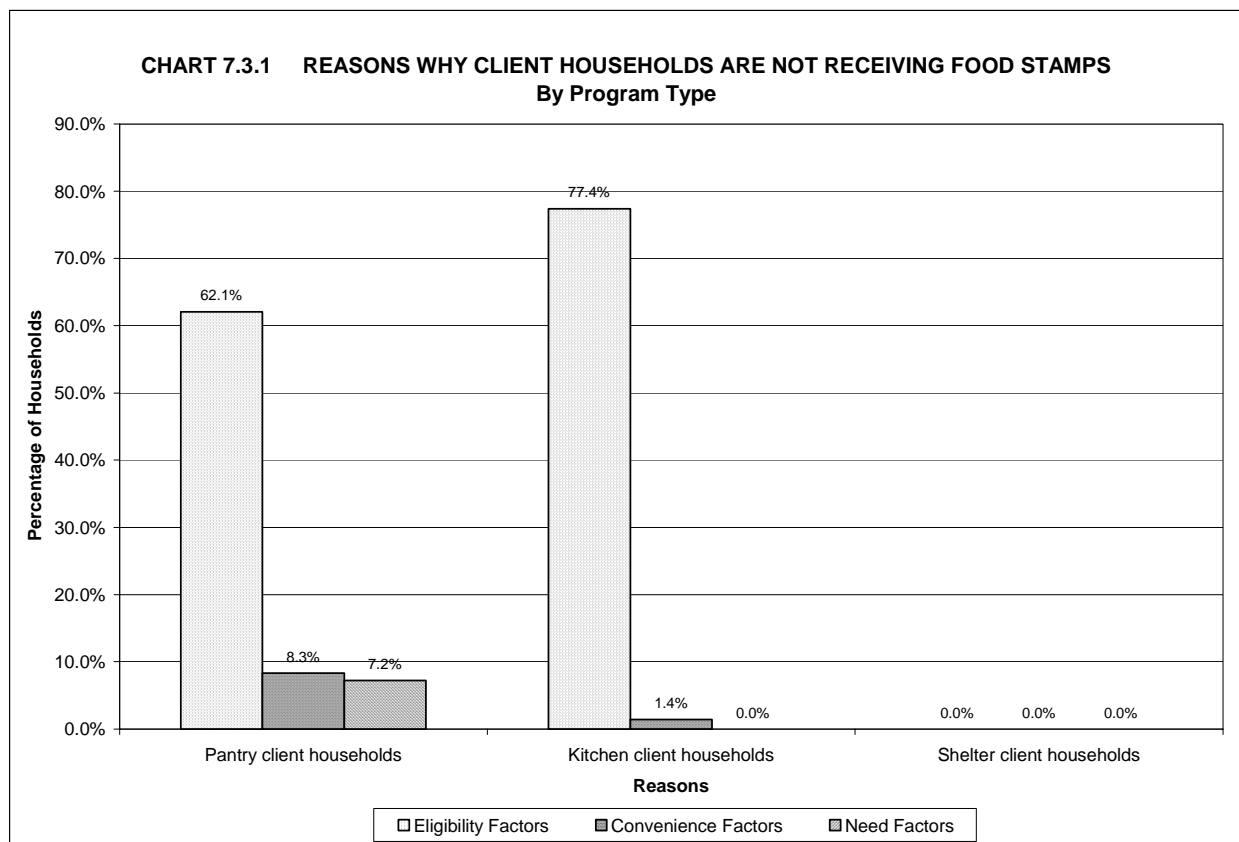


TABLE 7.3.2

REPORTED INCOME LEVELS OF CLIENTS WHO INDICATED INELIGIBLE INCOME  
AS A REASON FOR NOT RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS

Reported Income Levels of Clients Who Indicated Ineligible Income as a Reason for Not Receiving Food Stamps	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Ineligible income level	42.7%	n.p.	N.A.	57.5%
Income 130% of the federal poverty level or lower	33.6%	n.p.	N.A.	36.0%
Income higher than 130% of the federal poverty level	9.1%	n.p.	N.A.	21.5%
Income unknown	0.0%	n.p.	N.A.	0.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients who have applied for but are not currently receiving food stamps</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83</b>

As Table 7.3.2 shows, 57.5% of the clients indicated a higher-than-required income level as a reason they were not currently receiving food stamps. Those clients are further broken down into two categories based on the information about their previous month's household income: those whose income is 130% of the federal poverty level or lower (36.0%); and those whose income is higher than 130% of the federal poverty level (21.5%).

## 7.4 USE OF OTHER PROGRAMS

Clients also reported on other federal nutrition or child care programs they use. Table 7.4.1 shows the results.

TABLE 7.4.1  
USE OF OTHER PROGRAMS

Other Program(s) Clients or Their Families Currently Participate in <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Government Mass Distribution Program or TEFAP (cheese, butter, etc., not from pantries)	66.3%	34.8%	n.p.	62.9%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>
Senior nutrition sites, such as senior centers that serve lunch	19.4%	37.9%	n.p.	21.6%
Home-delivered meals or meals-on-wheels (usually for seniors or people with disabilities)	2.8%	7.1%	n.p.	4.0%
Senior brown-bag programs that give out groceries and produce	1.5%	32.7%	n.p.	5.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Households with at least one senior member age 65 or older</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>184</b>
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) <sup>b</sup>	77.7%	n.p.	n.p.	74.7%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Households with at least one child ages 0-3 years</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>89</b>
Child day care	7.4%	n.p.	n.p.	6.2%
Government assistance for child day care among those using child day care <sup>c</sup>	79.1%	N.A.	N.A.	79.1%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Households with at least one child ages 0-5 years</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>134</b>
School lunch program	74.2%	n.p.	n.p.	72.7%
School breakfast program	78.4%	n.p.	n.p.	76.7%
After-school snack program	31.5%	n.p.	n.p.	30.3%
Child care food program, such as meals at subsidized child care centers	12.4%	n.p.	n.p.	12.9%
Summer food program providing free lunches for children	18.6%	n.p.	n.p.	18.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Households with at least one child younger than age 18</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>242</b>

TABLE 7.4.1 (*continued*)

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SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 7a, 8, and 41 of the client survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>Note that in *Hunger in America 2001* households with children ages 0 to 5 years were used as the base of the WIC participation percentage. At the suggestion of an earlier reviewer, the current study uses a base of children ages 0 to 3 years, in order to better approximate the main population of children who actually use WIC. Because a smaller denominator leads to a larger percentage, this percentage may appear substantially larger than in 2001 for some food banks, which may not reflect the actual change in the rate of WIC participation. Therefore, readers must use caution when comparing this percentage between the two studies.

<sup>c</sup>The sample size is 8 for the pantries, 0 for the kitchens, 0 for the shelters, and 8 for all.

Among all client households, 62.9% participate in government mass distribution programs or TEFAP. Participation in other programs is as follows:

- Among the households with at least one senior member age 65 or older, 21.6% use senior nutrition sites; 4.0% use home-delivered meals or meals-on-wheels; and 5.0% participate in senior brown-bag programs.
- Among the households with at least one child younger than age 18, 72.7% and 76.7% benefit from the school lunch and the school breakfast program, respectively; 30.3% use an after-school snack program; 12.9% use a child care food program; and 18.0% participate in the summer food program.

## 7.5 GENERAL ASSISTANCE, WELFARE, AND TANF IN THE PREVIOUS TWO YEARS

Clients were asked whether they received general assistance, welfare, or TANF in the previous two years and, if so, whether the assistance had been discontinued. They also provided reasons for the discontinuation. Table 7.5.1 presents the results.

TABLE 7.5.1

### GENERAL ASSISTANCE, WELFARE, AND TANF IN THE PREVIOUS TWO YEARS

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Clients who received general assistance, welfare, or TANF during the past two years				
Yes	5.8%	15.8%	n.p.	6.9%
No	94.2%	84.2%	n.p.	93.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>
Clients for whom the assistance stopped during the past two years	17.7%	n.p.	n.p.	17.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients who received specified assistance</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>73</b>
Reasons for the discontinuation of the assistance <sup>a</sup>				
Ineligible income level	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
Change in household makeup	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
Time limit for receiving the help ran out	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
Sanctioned by welfare or another agency	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
Citizenship status	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
Too much hassle	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
Chose to stop receiving it	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
Other <sup>b</sup>	n.p.	n.p.	N.A.	n.p.
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Clients who received specified assistance, which then stopped during the previous two years</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 26, 27, and 28 of the client survey.

TABLE 7.5.1 (*continued*)

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NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For receiving assistance, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 4.9% for pantry clients, 8.0% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 5.1% for all clients.

For reasons for discontinuation of assistance, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 10.0% for pantry clients, 0.0% for kitchen clients, N.A. for shelter clients, and 7.8% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>This category includes having not reapplied, relocation, and found work.

During the previous two years, 6.9% of the clients received general assistance, welfare, or TANF. Details include:

- Among those who had received the specified assistance, 17.0% indicated that the assistance was discontinued.
- As for the reasons for the discontinuation, n.p. ascribed it to having an ineligible income level, n.p. to change of household makeup, and n.p. to time limit for the assistance.
- In addition, n.p. of the clients indicated that the assistance was discontinued because they were sanctioned by welfare or another agency, and n.p. mentioned their citizenship status as a factor.
- Also, n.p. of the clients no longer received the assistance because it was too much hassle for them, and n.p. chose to stop receiving the assistance.

## 7.6 GROCERY SHOPPING PATTERNS

Clients were asked where they do most of their grocery shopping. Results are shown in Table 7.6.1.

TABLE 7.6.1  
GROCERY SHOPPING PATTERNS

<i>Where do you do <u>most</u> of your grocery shopping?</i>	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
Supermarkets or grocery stores	87.6%	92.2%	n.p.	88.0%
Discount stores (e.g., Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart)	2.7%	4.1%	n.p.	2.8%
Warehouse clubs (e.g., Price Club, Costco, Pace, Sam's Club, BJ's)	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Convenience stores (e.g., 7-11, Quickshop, Wawa)	5.9%	0.8%	n.p.	5.4%
Ethnic food stores (e.g., bodegas, Asian food markets, or Caribbean markets)	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
Farmer's market	0.1%	0.0%	n.p.	0.1%
Other (including "dollar" stores)	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Don't know because someone else in family shops	0.6%	0.0%	n.p.	0.5%
Don't buy groceries, free food only	3.1%	2.9%	n.p.	3.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 40 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.3% for pantry clients, 6.2% for kitchen clients, 21.3% for shelter clients, and 1.2% for all clients.

Among all clients, 88.0% shop mostly at supermarkets or grocery stores. Information about other places where some of the clients do most their grocery shopping follows:

- 5.4% of the clients use convenience stores for most of their grocery shopping.

- 2.8% of the clients shop mostly at discount stores such as Wal-Mart, Target, or K-Mart.
- 3.1% of the clients do not buy groceries. They rely only on free food.



## 8. CLIENTS: HEALTH STATUS

Health status can be an important determinant of overall household circumstances and need. Therefore, the survey asked clients for information on the health of both themselves and other household members. The responses to these questions are presented below. In addition, data are presented on clients' access to health insurance and health care.

### 8.1 HEALTH STATUS

Clients were asked to indicate their health status, then to indicate whether anyone (or anyone else) in their household was in poor health. Table 8.1.1 summarizes the results.

TABLE 8.1.1  
HEALTH STATUS

	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
Clients who indicated that their health was...				
Excellent	13.1%	13.9%	n.p.	13.3%
Very good	34.4%	20.0%	n.p.	32.9%
Good	28.3%	34.8%	n.p.	28.8%
Fair	18.9%	15.8%	n.p.	18.7%
Poor	5.4%	15.5%	n.p.	6.3%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Clients who indicated that someone else in the household was in poor health				
Yes	15.0%	28.2%	n.p.	16.1%
No	47.2%	13.5%	n.p.	43.2%
Live alone	37.8%	58.3%	n.p.	40.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Households with at least one member reported to be in poor health	16.0%	30.3%	n.p.	17.2%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

TABLE 8.1.1 (*continued*)

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SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 20 and 21 of the client survey.

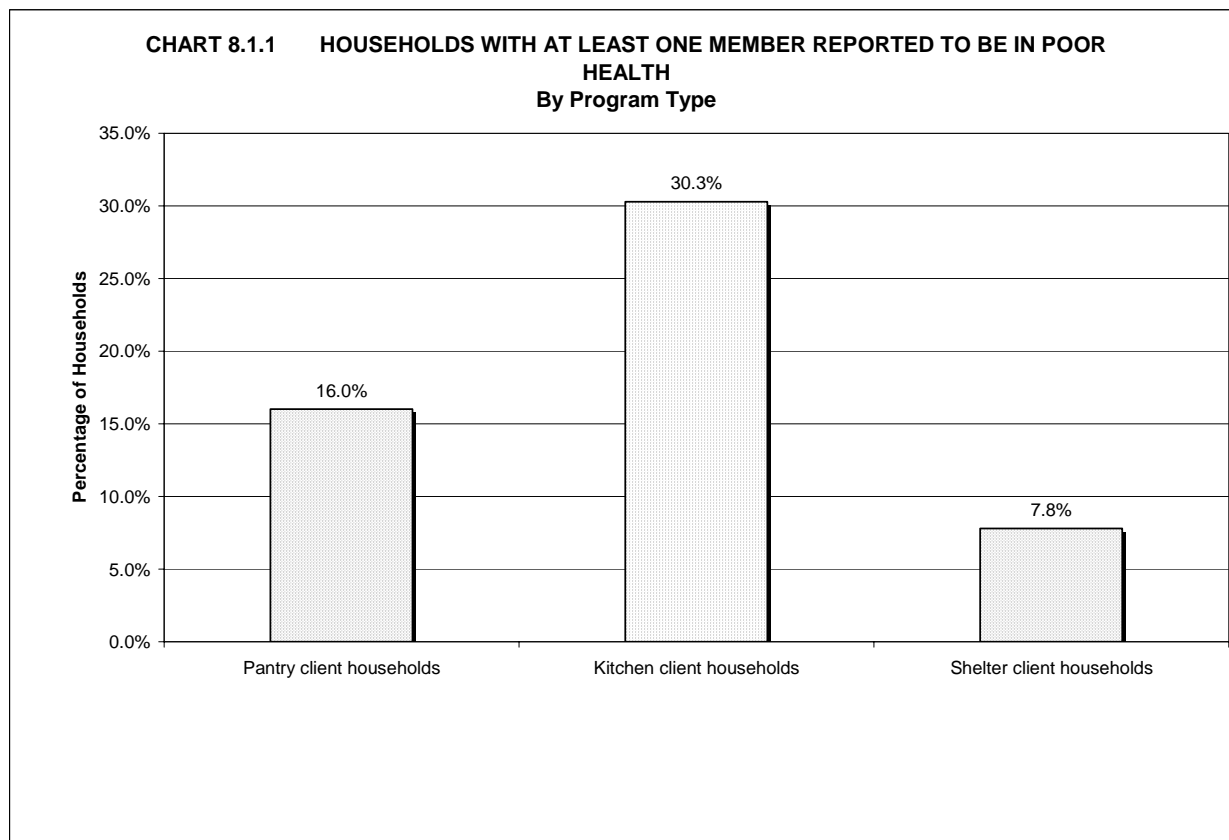
NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For client health, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.2% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.6% for all clients.

For poor health of anyone in household, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 9.8% for pantry clients, 2.9% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 9.0% for all clients.

Overall, 6.3% of the clients at all program sites are in poor health, and 17.2% of the client households have one or more members in poor health. More details follow:

- Among pantry clients, 13.1% were in excellent health, 34.4% in very good health, 28.3% in good health, and 24.3% in fair or poor health.
- Among kitchen clients, 13.9% were in excellent health, 20.0% in very good health, 34.8% in good health, and 31.3% in fair or poor health.
- Among shelter clients, n.p. were in excellent health, n.p. in very good health, n.p. in good health, and 31.7% in fair or poor health.
- 16.0% of the pantry client households had at least one person in poor health.
- 30.3% of the kitchen client households had at least one person in poor health.
- n.p. of the shelter client households had at least one person in poor health.



## 8.2 HEALTH INSURANCE AND ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE

Clients were asked whether they or anyone in their households had various kinds of health insurance. Clients also indicated whether they had unpaid medical or hospital bills and whether they had been refused medical care during the previous 12 months. Results are provided in Table 8.2.1.

TABLE 8.2.1  
HEALTH INSURANCE AND ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE

	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
Client or his or her family with following types of health insurance <sup>a</sup>				
Medicare <sup>b</sup>	69.1%	39.3%	n.p.	65.9%
State Medical Assistance Program or Medicaid	18.7%	17.3%	n.p.	18.4%
State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)	3.2%	0.0%	n.p.	2.9%
Veterans Administration (VA) benefits	1.6%	0.2%	n.p.	1.5%
Private health insurance	1.6%	15.5%	n.p.	3.1%
Other health insurance <sup>c</sup>	0.7%	0.0%	n.p.	0.6%
No insurance	13.7%	32.0%	n.p.	15.9%
Clients who had unpaid medical or hospital bills				
Yes	19.1%	44.2%	n.p.	21.3%
No	80.9%	55.8%	n.p.	78.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Clients who had been refused medical care because they could not pay or because they had a Medicaid or Medical Assistance card during the previous 12 months				
Yes	1.9%	9.3%	n.p.	2.9%
No	97.8%	90.6%	n.p.	96.9%
Not refused care, but avoid providers who don't accept medical assistance	0.3%	0.0%	n.p.	0.2%
Not refused care, but finding providers that accept medical assistance is a problem	0.0%	0.2%	n.p.	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%

TABLE 8.2.1 (*continued*)

	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 22a-f, 23, and 24 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For types of health insurance, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.1% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.5% for all clients.

For unpaid medical bills, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.5% for pantry clients, 4.7% for kitchen clients, 1.8% for shelter clients, and 0.9% for all clients.

For refused medical care, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.5% for pantry clients, 4.5% for kitchen clients, 0.8% for shelter clients, and 0.9% for all clients.

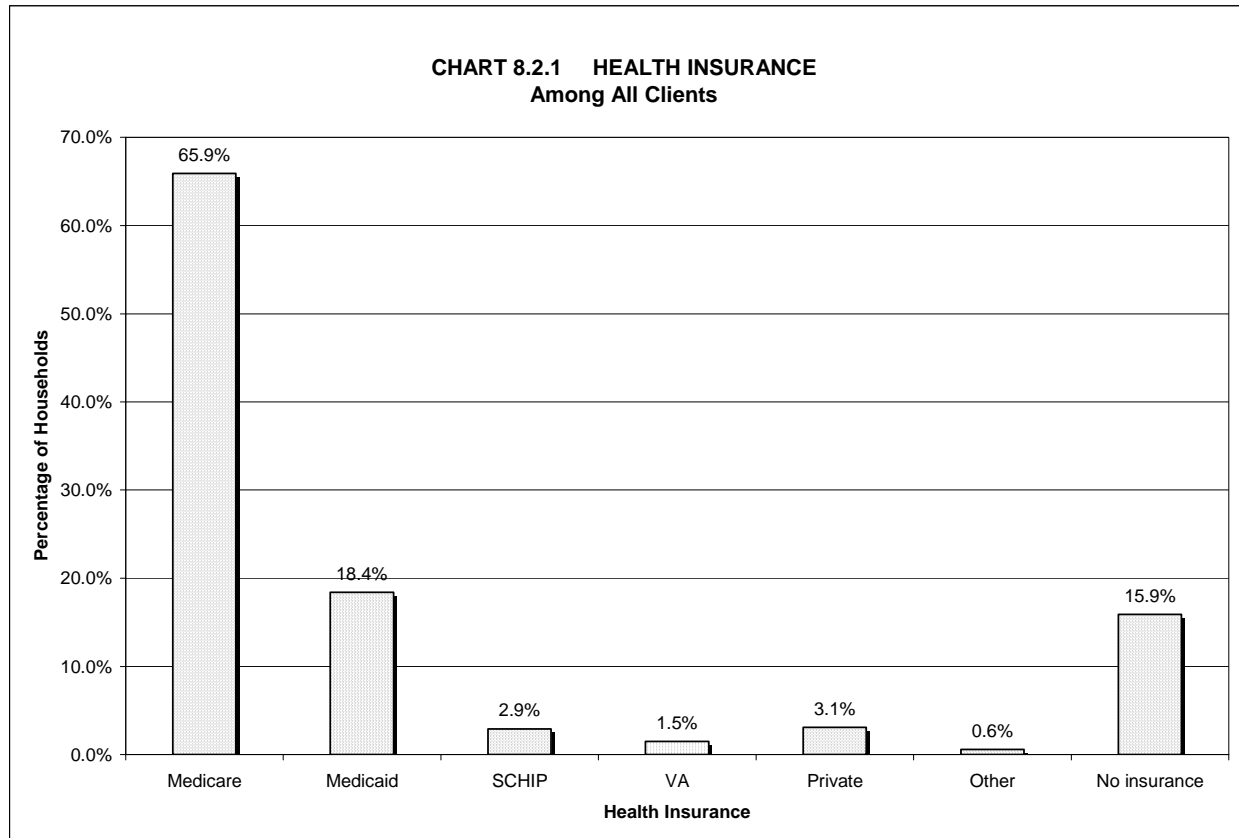
<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>At the national level, the percentage of people who reported having Medicare coverage is substantially larger than what appears to be appropriate considering the percentage of households with seniors. One possible explanation for the discrepancy is widespread confusion between Medicare and Medicaid programs.

<sup>c</sup>This category includes government retirement benefits and military health system (TRICARE).

Findings presented in Table 8.2.1 include:

- 13.7% of the pantry, 32.0% of the kitchen, and n.p. of the shelter clients or their households are without health insurance. This accounts for 15.9% of all clients.
- 21.3% of the clients have unpaid medical or hospital bills.
- 2.9% of the clients report that they have been refused medical care because they could not pay or because they had a Medicaid or Medical Assistance card during the previous 12 months.



## 9. CLIENTS: SERVICES RECEIVED AT FOOD PROGRAMS

To better understand how clients use the services of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, the survey asked questions about the numbers of kitchens and pantries that households used. Questions were also asked concerning the degree of satisfaction that respondents felt with the food services they were receiving from the providers and about what clients would do if they did not have access to the provider from which they were receiving food on the day of the interview. The answers to these questions are examined below.

### 9.1 NUMBER OF PANTRIES OR KITCHENS USED

Clients were asked how many different pantries or kitchens they had used during the previous month. The results are shown in Table 9.1.1.

TABLE 9.1.1  
NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PANTRIES OR KITCHENS USED

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Number of different food <b>pantries</b> clients or their families used during the previous month				
None	n.a.	79.0%	n.p.	8.4%
One or more pantries				
1 pantry	96.6%	17.8%	n.p.	88.3%
2 pantries	3.1%	0.1%	n.p.	2.8%
3 pantries	0.3%	3.0%	n.p.	0.5%
4 pantries	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
5 or more pantries	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
SUBTOTAL	100.0%	21.0%	n.p.	91.6%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%

TABLE 9.1.1 (*continued*)

	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Number of different soup <b>kitchens</b> clients or their families used during the previous month				
None	86.4%	n.a.	n.p.	79.0%
One or more kitchens				
1 kitchen	13.4%	96.7%	n.p.	20.5%
2 kitchens	0.2%	0.3%	n.p.	0.2%
3 kitchens	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
4 kitchens	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
5 or more kitchens	0.0%	3.0%	n.p.	0.3%
SUBTOTAL	13.6%	100.0%	n.p.	21.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 56 and 57 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For pantries used, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.6% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.9% for all clients.

For kitchens used, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 1.1% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 1.4% for all clients.

n.a. = not applicable.

Among the pantry clients, 96.6% used just one food pantry during the previous month.

More information on the clients' use of the emergency food programs follows:

- 96.7% of the kitchen clients used only one soup kitchen, and 21.0% also used one or more pantries.
- n.p. of the shelter clients used one or more pantries, and n.p. of the shelter clients also used one or more kitchens.
- 13.6% of the pantry clients also used one or more kitchens.



## 9.2 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES AT FOOD PROGRAMS

Clients were asked how satisfied they were with the amount, variety, and overall quality of food provided at the emergency food programs. Clients were also asked how often they were treated with respect by the staff of those programs. Table 9.2.1 summarizes the findings.

TABLE 9.2.1  
SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES AT FOOD PROGRAMS

Level of Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Service Provided to Clients or Others in the Household:	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
Amount of food provided				
Very satisfied	61.9%	79.7%	n.p.	63.0%
Somewhat satisfied	33.6%	7.0%	n.p.	31.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	4.2%	0.0%	n.p.	4.1%
Very dissatisfied	0.3%	13.3%	n.p.	1.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Variety of food provided				
Very satisfied	58.3%	72.9%	n.p.	59.5%
Somewhat satisfied	39.9%	6.6%	n.p.	36.8%
Somewhat dissatisfied	1.4%	2.3%	n.p.	1.8%
Very dissatisfied	0.4%	18.1%	n.p.	2.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Overall quality of food provided				
Very satisfied	65.7%	88.5%	n.p.	67.5%
Somewhat satisfied	31.7%	7.4%	n.p.	29.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2.6%	2.3%	n.p.	2.8%
Very dissatisfied	0.1%	1.8%	n.p.	0.2%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%
Frequency at which clients are treated with respect by the staff who distribute food				
All of the time	90.7%	94.6%	n.p.	90.5%
Most of the time	3.7%	0.1%	n.p.	3.7%
Some of the time	2.9%	3.5%	n.p.	3.2%
Never	0.0%	1.9%	n.p.	0.2%
Never came before	2.7%	0.0%	n.p.	2.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	n.p.	100.0%

TABLE 9.2.1 (*continued*)

Level of Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Service Provided to Clients or Others in the Household:	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry	Adult Clients at a Kitchen	Adult Clients at a Shelter	Adult Clients at All Program Sites
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 53 and 54 of the client survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For amount of food provided, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 2.6% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 2.7% for all clients.

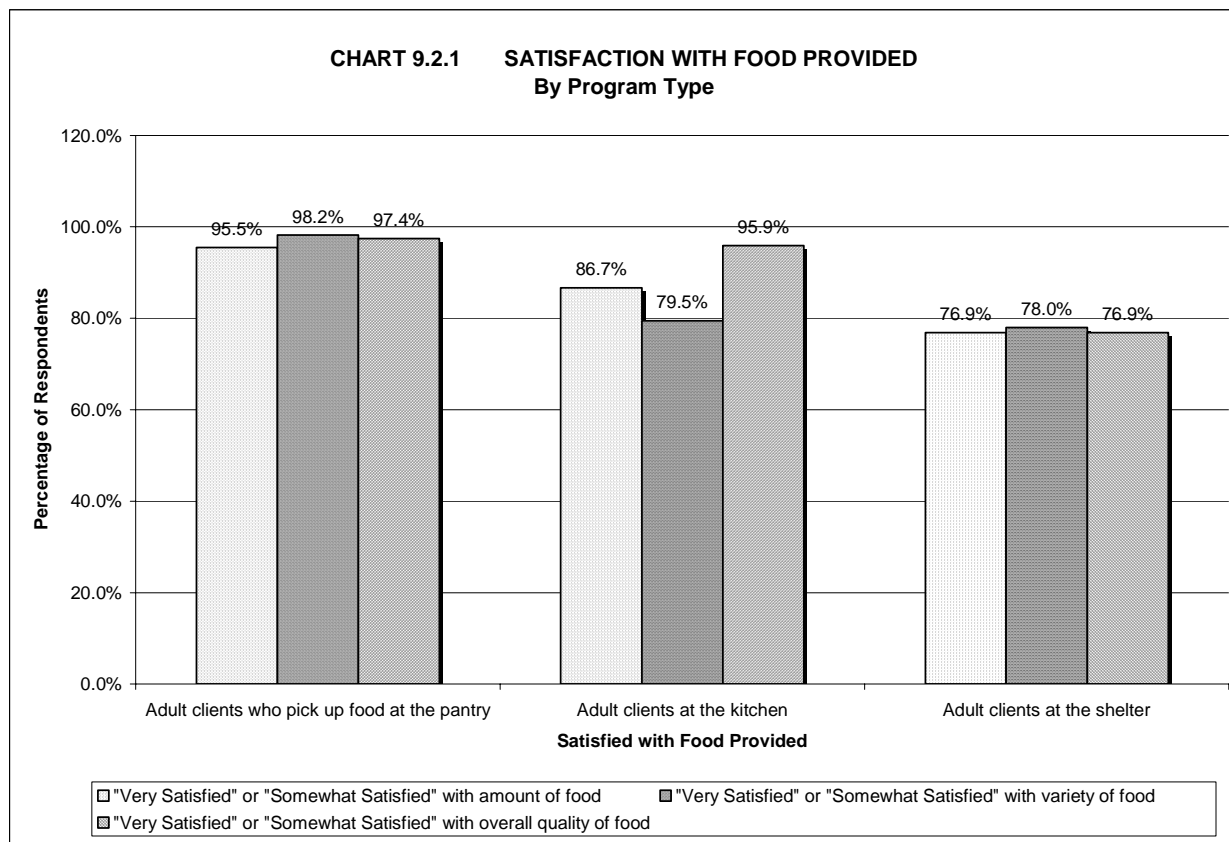
For variety of food provided, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 2.6% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 2.8% for all clients.

For overall quality of food provided, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 2.7% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 14.1% for all clients.

For client treatment by staff, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.3% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.7% for all clients.

Across all three kinds of emergency food programs, the level of satisfaction among clients is high. 94.4% are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the amount of the food they receive at the programs. Client satisfaction with specific aspects of the programs follows:

- 96.2% of the clients are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the variety of the food.
- 97.0% of the clients are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with overall quality of the food.
- 90.5% of the clients say that they are treated with respect by the staff all the time.



### 9.3 WHAT CLIENTS WOULD DO WITHOUT FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM THE AGENCY

Clients were asked what they would do without the agency helping them. Results are shown in Table 9.3.1.

TABLE 9.3.1

#### WHAT CLIENTS WOULD DO WITHOUT FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM THE AGENCY

<i>If this agency weren't here to help you or your household with food, what would you do?<sup>a</sup></i>	Pantry Client Households	Kitchen Client Households	Shelter Client Households	All Client Households
Go to another agency	73.3%	19.0%	n.p.	68.3%
Get help from relatives, friends	31.6%	4.0%	n.p.	28.7%
Get help from the government	1.5%	0.5%	n.p.	1.4%
Get a job, more hours, an additional job	4.4%	1.4%	n.p.	4.8%
Sell some personal property	0.9%	0.9%	n.p.	0.9%
Lower expenses	5.2%	1.3%	n.p.	4.7%
Eat less, skip meals, reduce size of meals	2.2%	18.7%	n.p.	3.6%
Would get by somehow	25.2%	37.2%	n.p.	25.8%
I have no other place to get help	1.7%	20.0%	n.p.	3.2%
Do something illegal	0.0%	0.0%	n.p.	0.0%
Do not know <sup>b</sup>	7.5%	3.5%	n.p.	7.0%
Other <sup>c</sup>	1.1%	0.3%	n.p.	1.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>514</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 55 of the client survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include cases with missing data.

Missing and refusal responses combined are 0.3% for pantry clients, 4.6% for kitchen clients, 0.0% for shelter clients, and 0.6% for all clients.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

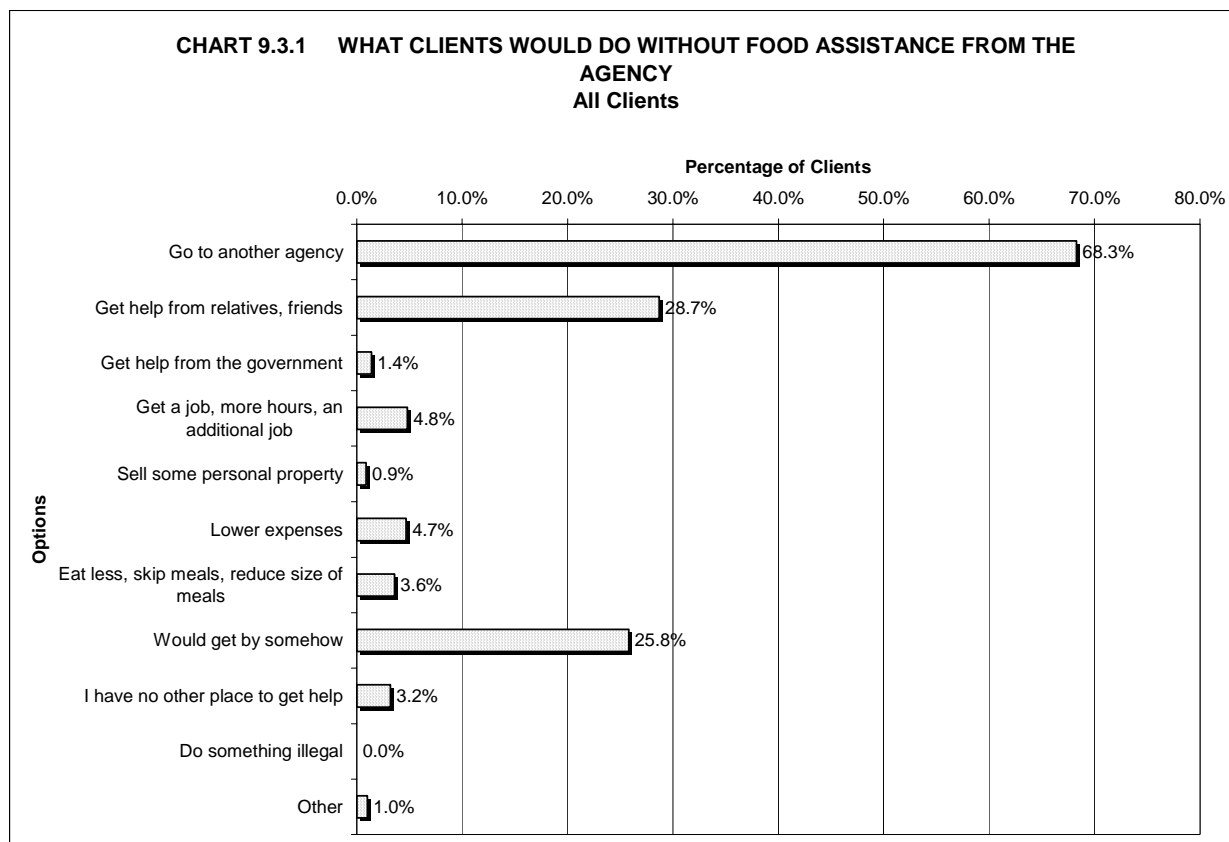
<sup>b</sup>Do not know responses to this question may indicate a feeling of hopelessness, disappointment, or desperation.

<sup>c</sup>This includes eating at home and begging.

In the absence of the agency helping the clients, 68.3% of them said that they would go to another agency. Other responses include:

- 25.8% of the clients said that they would get by somehow.

- 28.7% of the clients said that they would get help from relatives or friends.
- 3.6% of the clients said that they would eat less, skip meals, or reduce the size of meals.





## **10. AGENCIES AND FOOD PROGRAMS: PROFILES**

Until now, the discussion has focused on information from the *client* survey. This chapter begins the presentation of the results from the survey of *agencies* affiliated with the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The first section below details the numbers of responses received from various types of agencies. Next we present information on what combinations of programs are operated by the responding agencies. Subsequent sections examine characteristics of emergency food programs operated by these agencies, such as years of program operation, services provided other than food distribution, and types of organizations. Agency estimates of the changes in their numbers of clients between 2001 and 2005 are also presented.

### **10.1 PARTICIPATING AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS REPRESENTED**

The agency survey questionnaire was sent to approximately 315 agencies affiliated with the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. Each agency was asked to provide detailed information about one of each type of emergency food programs it operates (such as one pantry, one kitchen, and one shelter). Agencies operating nonemergency food programs only (referred to as “other programs”) were asked to answer several general questions only.

Of the agencies that received the questionnaire, 232 agencies completed the survey. Among those that completed the survey, 200 operate one or more emergency programs, and the remaining agencies operate other nonemergency food programs. Those 232 responding agencies

reported on 450 programs,<sup>20</sup> of which 50.2% are emergency food programs. Table 10.1.1 shows the breakdown of the participating agencies by the type of program they operate.

TABLE 10.1.1  
PROGRAMS REPORTED ON BY PARTICIPATING AGENCIES, BY PROGRAM TYPE

Program Type	Number	Unweighted Percentage	Unweighted Percentage Excluding "Other" Type
Pantry	188	41.8%	83.2%
Kitchen	24	5.3%	10.6%
Shelter	14	3.1%	6.2%
Other <sup>a</sup>	224	49.8%	n.a.
TOTAL <sup>b</sup>	450	100.0%	100.0%

<sup>a</sup>Other programs refer to nonemergency food programs. They are programs that have a primary purpose other than emergency food distribution but also distribute food. Examples include day care programs, senior congregate-feeding programs, and summer camps.

<sup>b</sup>This is the number of programs about which agencies provide detailed or some information. The total number of programs operated by these agencies is larger.

n.a. = not applicable.

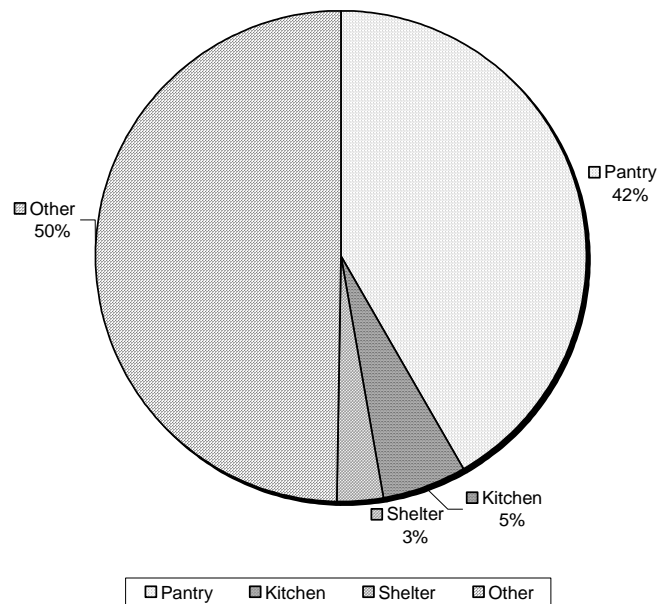
Among the total of 450 programs reported on by the agencies, 41.8% are pantries, 5.3% are kitchens, and 3.1% are shelters. The remaining 49.8% are other nonemergency food programs, such as child day care, senior-congregate feeding programs, and summer camps.

Excluding other nonemergency food programs makes the percentage breakdown 83.2% pantries, 10.6% kitchens, and 6.2% shelters.

<sup>20</sup> There are more programs than agencies, because agencies often run two or more programs of different types.



**CHART 10.1.1 PERCENTAGE OF REPORTED PROGRAMS  
By Program Type**



## 10.2 NUMBER OF PROGRAMS OPERATED BY AGENCIES

Percentages of the agencies operating various types of programs, as well as the total number of programs operated of each program type, are shown in Table 10.2.1.

TABLE 10.2.1

### NUMBER OF PROGRAMS OPERATED BY AGENCIES

Number of Programs of Each Type Operated by Agencies	Percentage of All Agencies That Operate the Specified Number of Each Program Type			
	Agencies with Pantries	Agencies with Kitchens	Agencies with Shelters	Agencies with Others
1	99.5%	100.0%	100.0%	96.0%
2	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
3 or more	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Agencies with at least one program for each program type</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>224</b>
Total number of participating agencies	232			
Total number of programs reported on by participating agencies	450			

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 1 of the agency survey.

Among the participating agencies, 188 operate at least one pantry program, 24 at least one kitchen program, and 14 at least one shelter program. A total of 232 agencies provided information about 450 programs.

### 10.3 AGENCIES OPERATING VARIOUS TYPE(S) OF PROGRAMS

Table 10.3.1 shows the distribution of agencies by types of programs they operate.

TABLE 10.3.1  
AGENCIES OPERATING VARIOUS TYPE(S) OF PROGRAMS

Combinations of Programs the Agency Operates	Agencies
Pantry only	2.2%
Kitchen only	0.0%
Shelter only	0.0%
Other program only	13.8%
Pantry and kitchen	0.0%
Kitchen and shelter	0.0%
Shelter and pantry	0.9%
Pantry and other	69.8%
Kitchen and other	3.5%
Shelter and other	1.3%
Pantry, kitchen, and shelter	0.4%
Pantry, kitchen, and other	4.7%
Kitchen, shelter, and other	0.4%
Shelter, pantry, and other	1.7%
Pantry, kitchen, shelter, and other	1.3%
Unknown	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Total number of participating agencies</b>	<b>232</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on responses to Question 1 of the agency survey.

As Table 10.3.1 shows, 2.2% of the participating agencies exclusively operate one or more pantries, while 0.0% and 0.0% operate exclusively kitchen or shelter programs, respectively.

## 10.4 LENGTH OF PROGRAM OPERATION

Responding agencies identified the year their emergency food programs opened. Table 10.4.1 shows the distribution of the length of program operation.

TABLE 10.4.1  
LENGTH OF PROGRAM OPERATION

How Long the Program Has Been Operating <sup>a</sup>	Percentage of Programs That Have Operated for a Specified Period			Agencies with Pantry, Kitchen, or Shelter
	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs	
2 years or less	17.1%	5.9%	8.4%	16.0%
3-4 years	20.8%	11.9%	16.8%	20.5%
5-6 years	18.3%	11.7%	8.4%	18.1%
7-10 years	18.9%	17.6%	8.4%	18.1%
11-20 years	14.6%	41.1%	33.1%	16.4%
21-30 years	3.7%	5.9%	8.4%	4.0%
More than 30 years	6.7%	5.9%	16.6%	6.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>200</b>
Average length of operation among valid responses (in years)	11	12	17	11
Median length of operation among valid responses (in years)	6	13	13	6
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>176</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 3b of the agency survey.

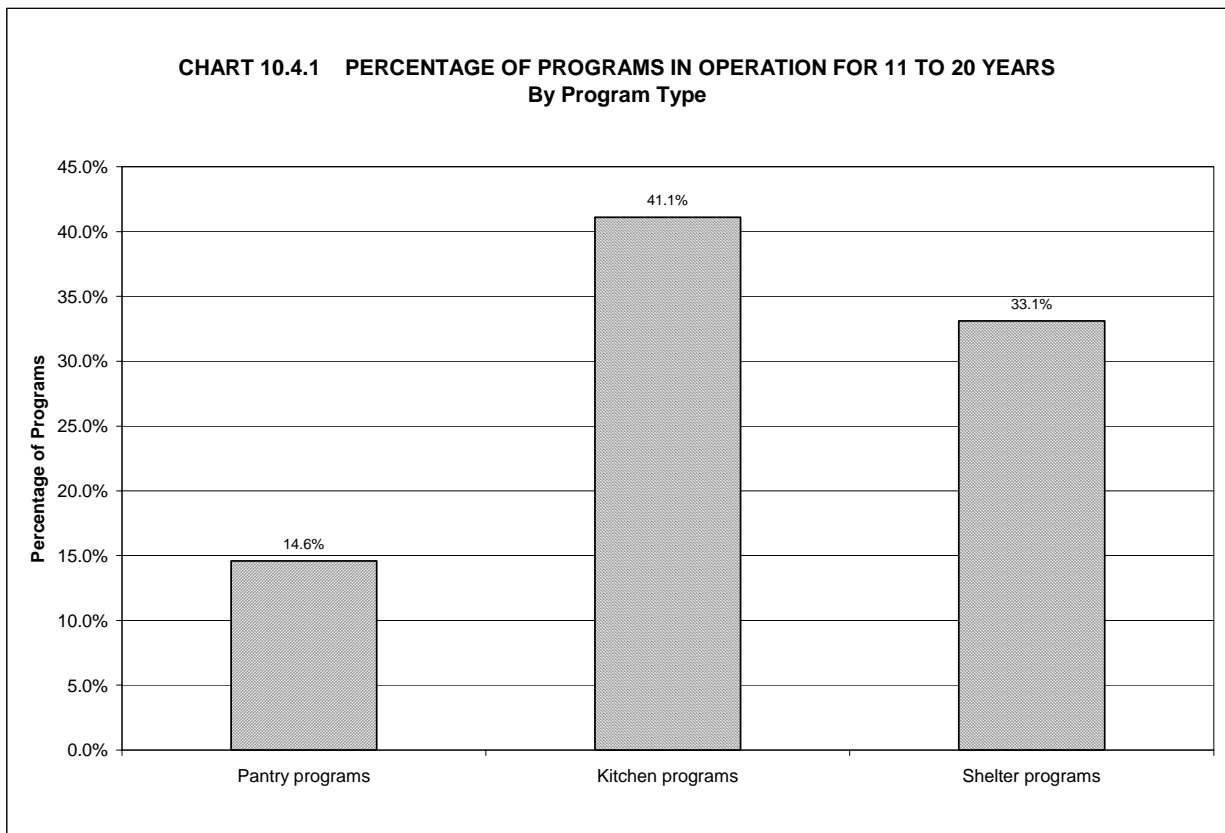
NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 12.8% for pantry programs, 29.3% for kitchen programs, 14.3% for shelter programs, and 12.0% for all agencies.

<sup>a</sup>For all programs, responses greater than 70 years of operation were recoded as 70 years. Responses less than 1 year were recoded as 1 year.

The average length of operation among the pantry programs is 11 years. It is 12 years for the kitchens and 17 years for the shelter programs. Details follow:

- 17.1% of the pantries, 5.9% of the kitchens, and 8.4% of the shelters have been operating for two years or less.
- 14.6% of the pantries, 41.1% of the kitchens, and 33.1% of the shelters have been operating for 11 to 20 years.
- 3.7% of the pantries, 5.9% of the kitchens, and 8.4% of the shelters have been operating for 21 to 30 years.
- 6.7% of the pantries, 5.9% of the kitchens, and 16.6% of the shelters have been operating for more than 30 years.



## 10.5 OTHER SERVICES OR FACILITIES PROVIDED IN ADDITION TO FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Agencies were provided with a list of additional possible services and asked which services their programs provide to their clients. Table 10.5.1 shows what percentage of food programs supply the services listed.

TABLE 10.5.1

OTHER SERVICES OR FACILITIES AGENCIES OR PROGRAMS PROVIDE  
IN ADDITION TO FOOD DISTRIBUTION, BY PROGRAM TYPE

	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Food-related support			
Nutrition counseling	32.2%	23.8%	49.8%
Eligibility counseling for WIC	13.5%	9.6%	33.2%
Eligibility counseling for food stamps	14.1%	4.8%	41.5%
Soup kitchen meals	4.7%	n.a.	33.2%
Food pantry bags	n.a.	33.3%	41.7%
Client Training			
Employment training	4.1%	23.7%	41.5%
Supported employment (Welfare to Work or job training)	1.7%	9.5%	25.0%
Retraining physically disabled	0.6%	9.5%	16.6%
Retraining mentally ill/challenged	0.6%	9.5%	16.6%
Other Assistance			
Eligibility counseling for other government programs	4.1%	14.3%	16.5%
Legal services	5.3%	4.8%	41.5%
Tax preparation help (Earned Income Tax Credit)	4.7%	4.7%	8.3%
Utility bill assistance (Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Programs)	20.5%	9.5%	24.9%
Short-term financial assistance	4.1%	9.5%	8.3%
Budget and credit counseling	5.9%	9.5%	24.8%
Consumer protection	1.2%	4.7%	24.8%
Information and referral	22.2%	19.0%	58.1%
Language translation	19.9%	9.5%	41.6%

TABLE 10.5.1 (*continued*)

	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
<b>Housing Services</b>			
Short-term shelter	7.0%	9.5%	83.2%
Subsidized housing assistance	1.7%	9.5%	16.6%
Housing rehabilitation or repair	3.5%	14.3%	0.0%
<b>Health and Other Services</b>			
Health services or health clinics	11.7%	28.6%	24.8%
Transportation	14.1%	14.3%	74.9%
Clothing	43.3%	23.7%	66.5%
Furniture	18.7%	19.0%	41.4%
Senior programs	7.0%	14.3%	16.5%
No additional services	27.5%	28.6%	8.4%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 4 of the agency survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 9.1% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 14.3% for shelter programs.

n.a. = not applicable.

13.5% of pantries and 33.2% of shelters provide counseling for WIC. Other services provided by the programs or the agencies include:

- 14.1% of the pantries, 4.8% of the kitchens, and 41.5% of the shelters provide eligibility counseling for food stamps.
- 16.5% of the shelters provide counseling for other government programs.
- 20.5% of the pantries provide utility bill assistance.
- 22.2% of the pantries, 19.0% of the kitchens, and 58.1% of the shelters provide information and referral services.
- 41.5% of the shelters provide employment training.
- 11.7% of the pantries, 28.6% of the kitchens, and 24.8% of the shelters provide health services or health clinics.
- 74.9% of the shelters provide transportation.
- 43.3% of the pantries, 23.7% of the kitchens, and 66.5% of the shelters provide clothing.

Table 10.5.2 shows the distribution of the number of additional services that emergency food programs offer to their clients.

TABLE 10.5.2  
NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL SERVICES, BY PROGRAM TYPE

Number of Additional Services or Facilities Provided by Programs	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
None	27.5%	28.6%	8.4%
1	22.8%	28.6%	16.8%
2-5	34.5%	19.0%	8.4%
6-10	11.7%	14.3%	16.8%
More than 10	3.5%	9.5%	49.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>
Average number of additional services among those that provide at least one such service	3	3	9
Median number of additional services among those that provide at least one such service	1	1	8
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 4 of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 9.1% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 14.3% for shelter programs.

On average, pantries provide 3 additional services or facilities. Kitchens and shelters provide, on average, 3 and 9 additional services, respectively.

- 27.5% of pantry programs, 28.6% of kitchen programs, and 8.4% of shelter programs do not offer any other services or facilities.
- 22.8% of pantry programs, 28.6% of kitchen programs, and 16.8% of the shelter programs offer one additional service or facility.



- 34.5% of pantry programs, 19.0% of kitchen programs, and 8.4% of shelter programs offer two to five additional services or facilities.
- 11.7% of pantry programs, 14.3% of kitchen programs, and 16.8% of shelter programs offer as many as 6 to 10 additional services or facilities.
- 3.5% of pantry programs, 9.5% of kitchen programs, and 49.7% of shelter programs offer more than 10 additional services or facilities.

In addition to other services provided by their programs, agencies were asked whether they provide other facilities at the agency level for their clients. Table 10.5.3 summarizes the results.

TABLE 10.5.3  
OTHER FACILITIES AGENCIES PROVIDE IN ADDITION TO  
FOOD DISTRIBUTION, BY PROGRAM TYPE

	Agencies with Pantry, Kitchen, or Shelter
Health clinic	5.3%
Group home for physically/mentally disadvantaged	0.0%
Other residential facility	5.3%
Child day care program	0.6%
Youth after school program	8.2%
Summer camp serving low-income clients	2.3%
Senior congregate feeding program	2.9%
Other <sup>a</sup>	8.2%
No other facilities/programs	74.7%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>200</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 27 of the agency survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 11.4%.

<sup>a</sup>This includes learning centers, food delivery services, and day programs for mentally disabled adults.

As many as 5.3% of agencies also operate health clinics. Other facilities run by agencies include:

- 0.0% of agencies run group homes for physically/mentally disadvantaged.
- 5.3% of agencies run other types of residential facilities.
- 0.6% of agencies run child day care programs.
- 8.2% of agencies run youth after-school programs.

- 2.3% of agencies run summer camps serving low-income clients.
- 2.9% of agencies run senior congregate-feeding programs.
- 8.2% of agencies run some other type of facility not mentioned above.

## 10.6 TYPE OF AGENCY THAT OPERATES THE PROGRAM

Table 10.6.1 shows types of agencies operating each type of program.

TABLE 10.6.1  
TYPE OF AGENCY THAT OPERATES THE PROGRAM

Type of Agency That Operates the Program	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs	Agencies with Pantry, Kitchen, or Shelter	All Agencies
Faith-based or religion-affiliated nonprofit	72.9%	47.7%	50.0%	70.3%	64.2%
Other private nonprofit	11.4%	30.5%	42.8%	13.8%	16.8%
Governmental	10.3%	17.5%	7.2%	10.8%	13.7%
Community Action Program (CAP)	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%
Other <sup>a</sup>	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%	4.1%	4.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>232</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 28 of the agency survey.

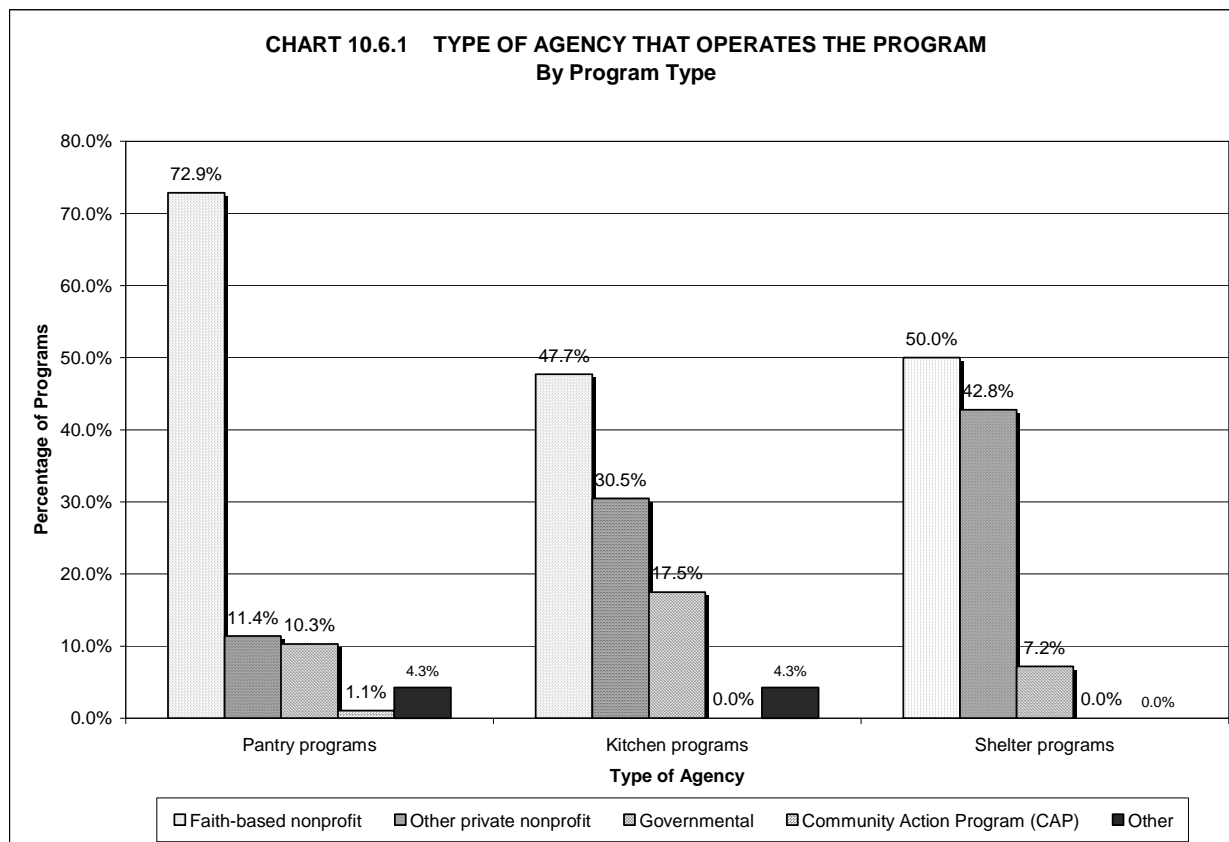
NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 1.6% for pantry programs, 4.2% for kitchen programs, 0.0% for shelter programs, 2.0% for agencies with pantry, kitchen, or shelter programs, and 2.2% for all agencies.

<sup>a</sup>This includes various community-based organizations.

Table 10.6.1 shows that 72.9% of the pantries, 47.7% of the kitchens, and 50.0% of the shelters are run by faith-based or religion-affiliated nonprofit agencies. In addition:

- 10.3% of the pantries, 17.5% of the kitchens, and 7.2% of the shelters are run by government-affiliated agencies.
- The remaining agencies are operated by other kinds of private nonprofit organizations, such as community-based charities or philanthropic organizations.



## 10.7 PROGRAMS SERVING SELECTED TYPES OF CLIENTS

Agencies were asked whether their programs serve migrant workers, legal immigrants, or undocumented immigrants.<sup>21</sup>

TABLE 10.7.1  
PROGRAMS SERVING SELECTED TYPES OF CLIENTS

	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
<b>Migrant Workers</b>			
Yes	80.2%	66.5%	88.8%
No	19.8%	33.5%	11.2%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Legal Immigrants</b>			
Yes	91.3%	73.5%	89.9%
No	8.7%	26.5%	10.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Undocumented Immigrants</b>			
Yes	82.8%	58.6%	77.8%
No	17.2%	41.4%	22.2%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 18 of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For migrant workers, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 16.5% for pantry programs, 24.9% for kitchen programs, and 35.7% for shelter programs.

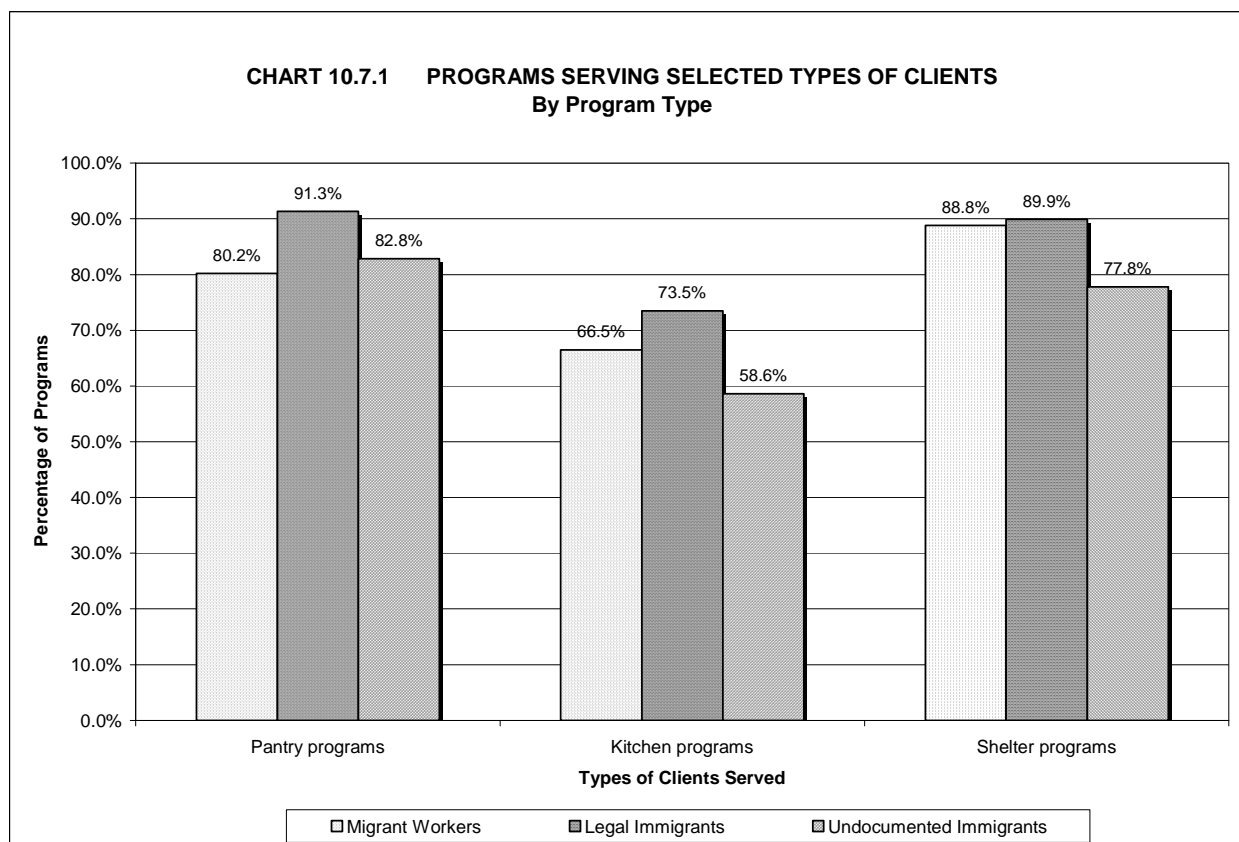
For legal immigrants, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 13.9% for pantry programs, 20.8% for kitchen programs, and 28.6% for shelter programs.

For undocumented immigrants, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 19.7% for pantry programs, 29.1% for kitchen programs, and 35.8% for shelter programs.

<sup>21</sup> At the national level, a large number of the responding agencies left these three questions unanswered.

Findings in Table 10.7.1 include:

- 80.2% of the pantries, 66.5% of the kitchens, and 88.8% of the shelters serve migrant workers.
- 91.3% of the pantries, 73.5% of the kitchens, and 89.9% of the shelters serve legal immigrants.
- 82.8% of the pantries, 58.6% of the kitchens, and 77.8% of the shelters serve undocumented immigrants.



## 10.8 AGENCY ESTIMATES OF CHANGE IN NUMBER OF CLIENTS FROM 2001 TO 2005

Agencies were asked whether they serve more or fewer clients than they did in 2001.

Table 10.8.1 shows the findings.

TABLE 10.8.1

### AGENCY ESTIMATES OF CHANGE IN NUMBER OF CLIENTS FROM 2001 TO 2005

Agency Estimate of Change in the Number of Clients Compared with Year 2001	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
More clients	68.2%	76.2%	81.8%
Fewer clients	6.8%	9.6%	0.0%
About the same number of clients	17.6%	14.2%	18.2%
Program did not exist in 2001	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 7 of the agency survey.

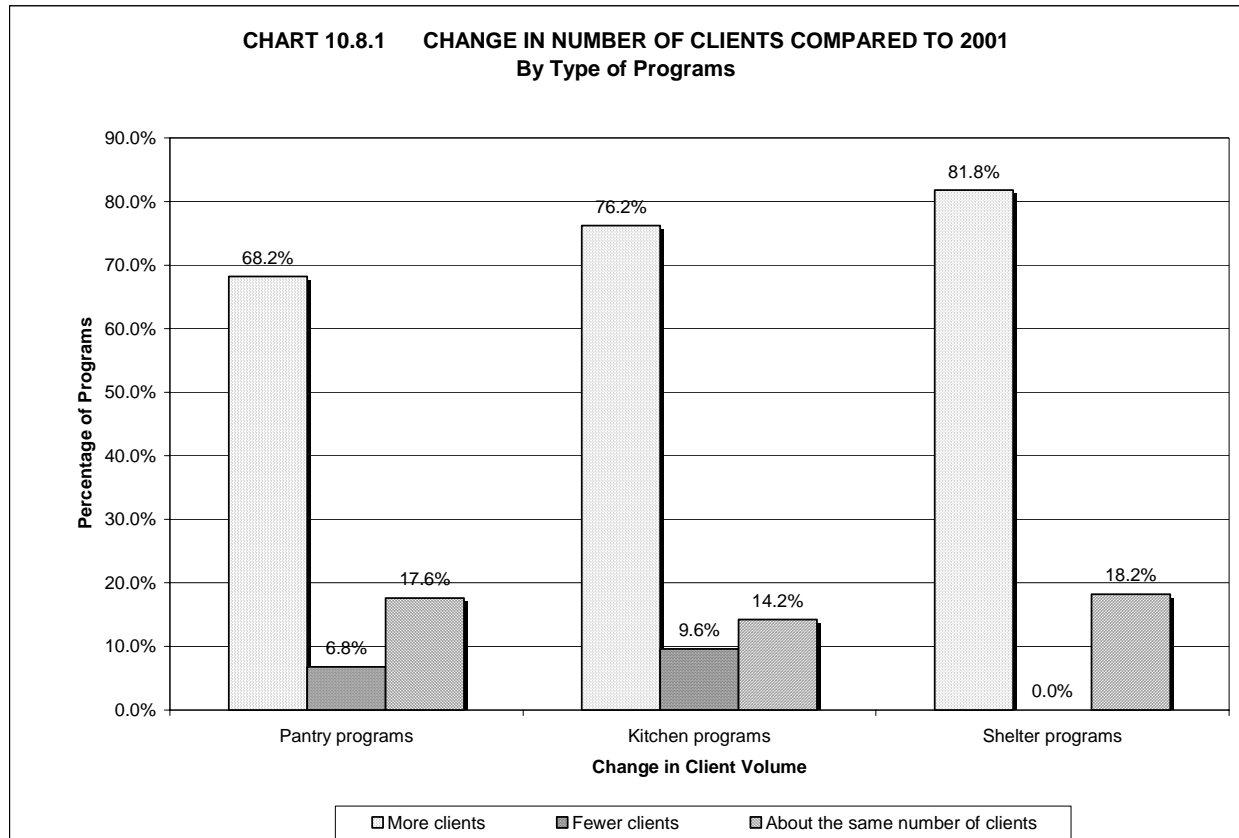
NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 6.4% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 21.5% for shelter programs.

Regarding the volume of the clients, 68.2% of the pantries, 76.2% of the kitchens, and 81.8% of the shelters indicate that they serve more clients now than they did in 2001.

- 17.6% of the pantries, 14.2% of the kitchens, and 18.2% of the shelters indicated that they serve about the same number of clients in 2005 as in 2001.
- 6.8% of the pantries, 9.6% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters indicated that they serve fewer clients in 2005 than they did in 2001.
- 7.4% of the pantries, 0.0% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters did not exist in 2001.





## 10.9 SEASONALITY OF CLIENT MIX

Agencies were asked whether their programs experience significant change in client mix by season and, if so, what kinds of change. Results are shown in Table 10.9.1.

TABLE 10.9.1  
SEASONALITY OF CLIENT MIX

Nature of Changes in Client Mix During the Year <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Ratio of men to women changes	10.2%	19.0%	36.2%
Mix of ethnic groups changes	1.7%	4.7%	18.1%
Many more children in summer	33.3%	37.9%	27.1%
Many more migrant workers in summer	5.7%	9.5%	9.0%
Many more migrant workers in winter	24.2%	23.7%	18.2%
Different group of people at the holidays	29.3%	38.0%	45.3%
Other <sup>b</sup>	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Do not experience change in client mix	44.7%	47.8%	36.6%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Questions 19 of the agency survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 5.9% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 21.5% for shelter programs.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>This includes fewer elderly people in winter and more families in winter.

44.7% of the pantries, 47.8% of the kitchens, and 36.6% of the shelters indicated that they do not experience seasonal changes in the mix of clients during the year. As to the nature of seasonal changes in client mix among programs that experience such changes:

- 10.2% of the pantries, 19.0% of the kitchens, and 36.2% of the shelters said they experience changes in the ratio of men to women.

- 33.3% of the pantries, 37.9% of the kitchens, and 27.1% of the shelters said they serve more children in summer.
- 29.3% of the pantries, 38.0% of the kitchens, and 45.3% of the shelters said they serve a different group of people during the holidays.



## 11. AGENCIES AND FOOD PROGRAMS: FOOD SERVICES

In understanding the workings of the A2H network, it is important to understand the broad differences between providers in their scales of operations. The chapter discusses a number of indicators of the size of provider food service operations. As will be seen, providers vary dramatically in size, from pantries that serve just a few clients a day to pantries and kitchens that provide food to hundreds of clients on a given day of operation.

There is great variation among providers in the detail with which they keep long-term records such as service and client counts. Therefore, the analysis below focuses on measures of size based on either a “typical week” or on the “most recent day the provider was open,” since these are the size concepts that respondents were in general best able to relate to.

### 11.1 NUMBER OF BOXES OR BAGS DISTRIBUTED IN A TYPICAL WEEK

Agencies were asked how much food their pantries distribute during a typical week and how much a typical box or bag weighs. Table 11.1.1 shows the results.

TABLE 11.1.1  
NUMBER OF BOXES OR BAGS DISTRIBUTED IN A TYPICAL WEEK

	Pantry Programs
Programs distributing the following number of boxes or bags of food in a typical week <sup>a</sup> :	
1-9	9.7%
10-29	19.5%
30-49	15.6%
50-99	25.3%
100-299	25.3%
300-499	0.7%
500 or more	3.9%
TOTAL	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>

TABLE 11.1.1 (*continued*)

	Pantry Programs
Average number of boxes or bags of food distributed in a typical week among valid responses <sup>b</sup>	190
Median number of boxes or bags of food distributed in a typical week among valid responses <sup>b</sup>	50
Average weight of a typical bag/box among valid responses (in pounds)	26
Median weight of a typical bag/box among valid responses (in pounds)	30
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>155</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 6 and 6a of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all pantries (as noted earlier in this footnote only) of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 18.1% for pantry programs.

<sup>a</sup>For pantries, responses greater than 5,000 bags or boxes distributed were recoded as 5,000 bags or boxes. Responses greater than 40 pounds per bag or box were recoded as 40 pounds.

<sup>b</sup>Zeros as responses were not included as valid responses for calculating the average and the median.

On average, the participating pantries distributed 190 boxes or bags (median: 50) of food during a typical week, with the average weight of a typical box or bag being 26 pounds. More details on the amount of food distributed during a typical week follow:

- 19.5% of the pantries distributed 10 to 29 boxes or bags of food.
- 15.6% of the pantries distributed 30 to 49 boxes or bags of food.
- 25.3% of the pantries distributed 50 to 99 boxes or bags of food.
- 25.3% of the pantries distributed 100 to 299 boxes or bags of food.
- 0.7% of the pantries distributed 300 to 499 boxes or bags of food.
- 3.9% of the pantries distributed 500 or more boxes or bags.

## 11.2 AMOUNT OF FOOD SERVED ON THE DAY THE PROGRAM WAS LAST OPEN

Agencies were asked how much food their programs distributed when they were last open. Results are presented in Table 11.2.1.

TABLE 11.2.1

### AMOUNT OF FOOD SERVED ON THE DAY THE PROGRAM WAS LAST OPEN

	Pantry Programs (in Bags or Boxes)	Kitchen Programs (in Meals)	Shelter Programs (in Meals)
Programs that distributed the following number of boxes/bags or meals of food <sup>a,b</sup>			
1-9	10.6%	5.9%	0.0%
10-29	21.9%	5.9%	25.0%
30-49	14.6%	17.7%	12.4%
50-99	24.5%	23.5%	25.0%
100-149	9.9%	11.7%	0.0%
150-199	5.3%	5.9%	0.0%
200-249	4.6%	5.8%	0.0%
250 or more	8.6%	23.5%	37.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>
Average number of bags or boxes of food distributed, among valid responses <sup>c</sup>	96	n.a.	n.a.
Median number of bags or boxes of food distributed, among valid responses <sup>c</sup>	50	n.a.	n.a.
Average number of meals served, among valid responses <sup>c</sup>	n.a.	188	125
Median number of meals served, among valid responses <sup>c</sup>	n.a.	90	60
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 6c of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 19.7% for pantry programs, 29.2% for kitchen programs, and 43.0% for shelter programs.

TABLE 11.2.1 (*continued*)

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<sup>a</sup>For pantries and kitchens, responses greater than 1,000 bags or boxes distributed or meals served were recoded as 1,000 bags or boxes distributed or meals served. For shelters, responses greater than 300 meals served were recoded as 300 meals served.

<sup>b</sup>It should be noted that, particularly for pantries, amounts distributed per day can vary substantially over the month, so responses may depend on when the survey was filled out.

<sup>c</sup>Zeros as responses were not included as valid responses for calculating the average and the median.

n.a. = not applicable.

Emergency food programs vary greatly in size. Some programs served several people and others several hundred people when they were last open. On average, the pantry programs distributed 96 boxes/bags (median: 50) of food when they were last open. The kitchen programs distributed 188 meals (median: 90) and the shelter programs distributed 125 meals (median: 60).



## 12. AGENCIES AND FOOD PROGRAMS: ABILITY TO MEET CLIENT NEEDS

The study has also examined the capacity of the agencies and food programs to meet client needs. Below, we consider the stability of the programs, the main problems they face, and the degree to which they have had to stretch resources or turn away clients. Reasons why some agencies have had to turn away clients are also discussed.

### 12.1 STABILITY OF EXISTING FOOD PROGRAMS

Agencies were asked whether their food programs are stable or facing problems that threaten their food programs' continued operation and, if so, which of several listed factors were the causes of the threat. Agencies were asked to check more than one reason, if more than one was appropriate. Table 12.1.1 shows the percentage of food programs affected by each of the factors cited.

TABLE 12.1.1  
STABILITY OF EXISTING FOOD PROGRAMS

	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Nature of the problem <sup>a</sup>			
Problems related to funding	42.5%	57.0%	59.7%
Problems related to food supplies	15.5%	23.8%	19.9%
Problems related to paid staff or personnel	2.9%	14.2%	19.9%
Problems related to volunteers	10.3%	9.5%	9.9%
Community resistance	1.7%	9.5%	0.0%
Other problems	3.4%	4.8%	0.0%
Programs not facing problems that threaten their continued operation	46.6%	33.5%	40.3%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 17 of the agency survey.

TABLE 12.1.1 (*continued*)

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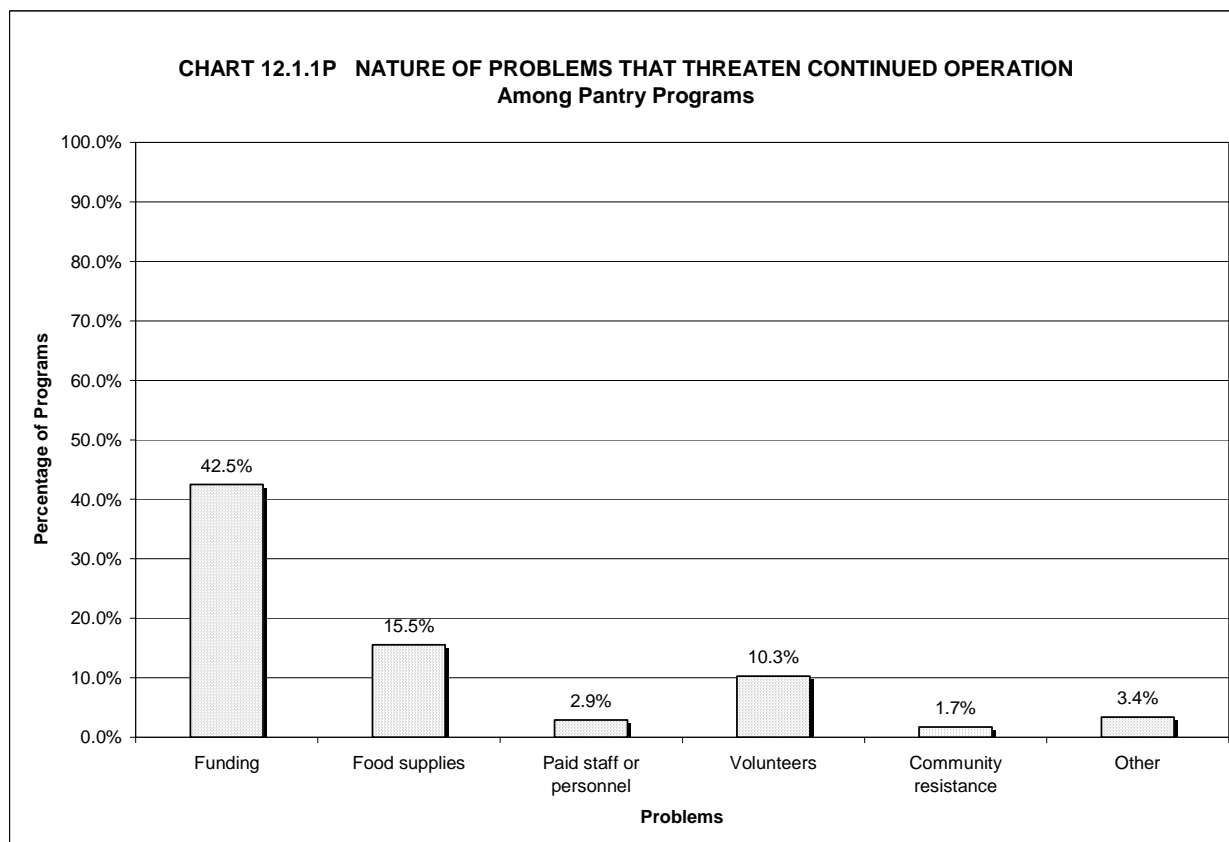
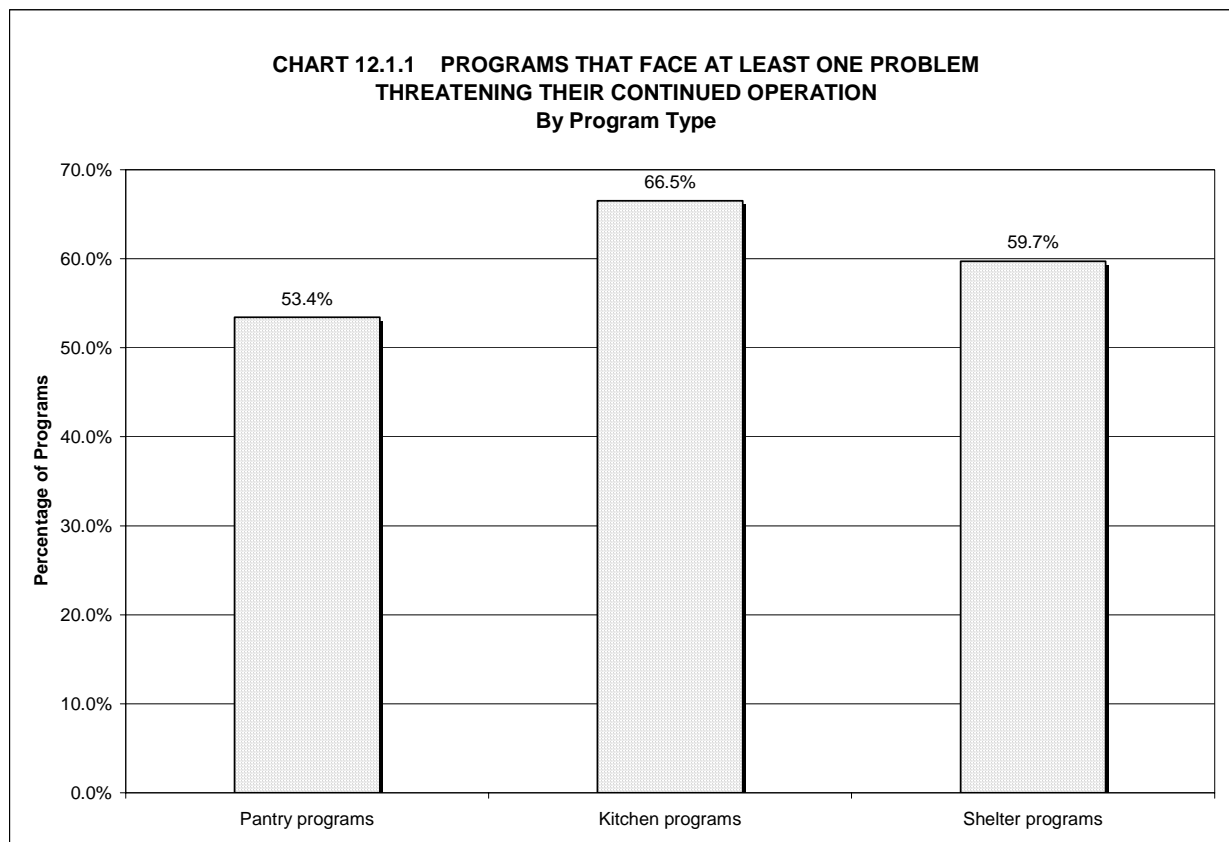
NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 7.5% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 28.7% for shelter programs.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

As Table 12.1.1 shows, 53.4% of the pantries, 66.5% of the kitchens, and 59.7% of the shelters believe they are facing one or more problems that threaten their continued operation:

- Of the programs facing threats, 42.5% of the pantries, 57.0% of the kitchens, and 59.7% of the shelters referred to funding issues as a threat; 15.5% of the pantries, 23.8% of the kitchens, and 19.9% of the shelters indicated food supplies as a threat to their continued operation.
- 14.2% of the threatened kitchens and 19.9% of the threatened shelters identified issues related to paid staff or personnel as a threat; 10.3% of the pantries and 9.5% of the kitchens stated that volunteer-related problems posed a threat.



## 12.2 FREQUENCY OF STRETCHING FOOD RESOURCES

Agencies were asked whether their programs ever had to ration or limit food in order to provide some food to all clients and, if so, how often. Table 12.2.1 shows the varying degrees of frequency with which the food programs stretched food resources.

TABLE 12.2.1  
FREQUENCY OF STRETCHING FOOD RESOURCES

During 2005, How Often Did the Program Have to Reduce Meal Portions or Reduce the Quantity of Food in Food Packages Because of a Lack of Food	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Never	58.0%	76.2%	80.1%
Rarely	36.3%	19.0%	19.9%
SUBTOTAL	94.3%	95.2%	100.0%
Sometimes	5.1%	4.8%	0.0%
Always	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
SUBTOTAL	5.7%	4.8%	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

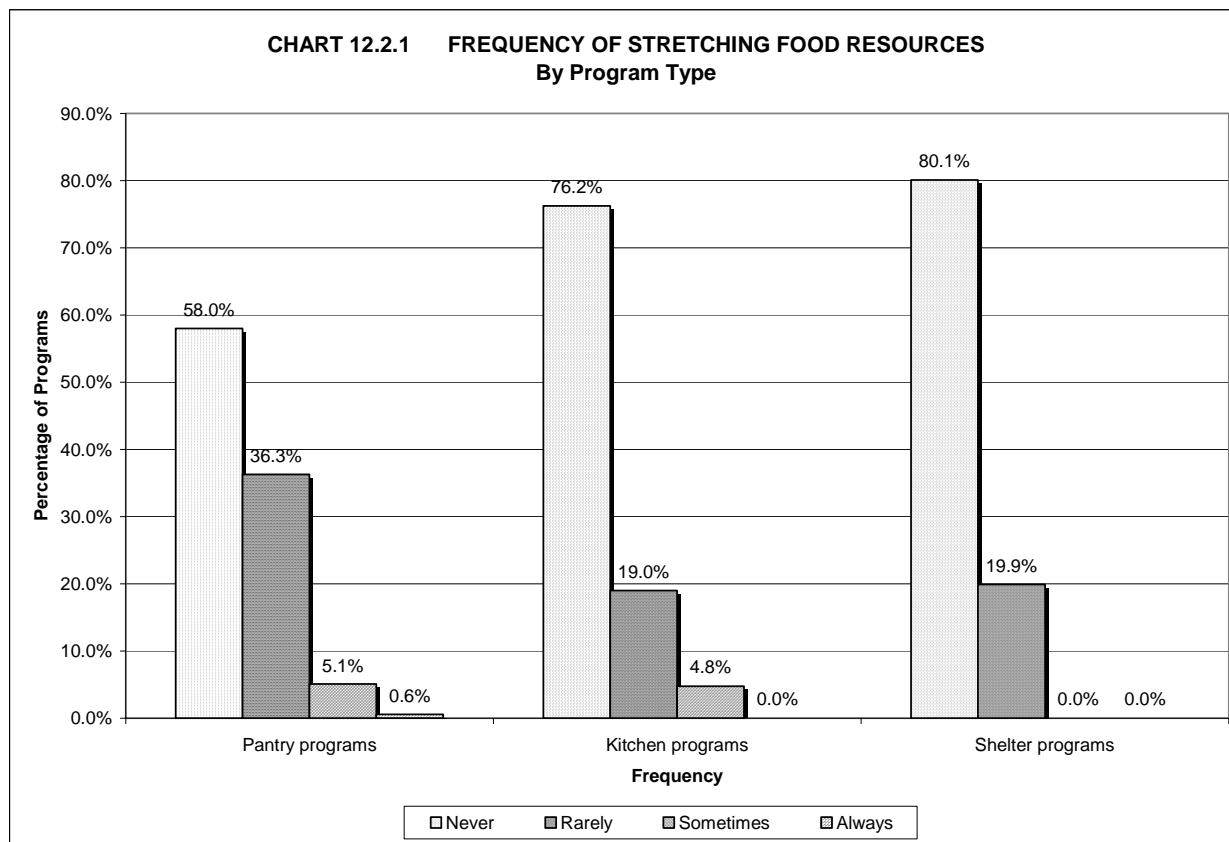
SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 13 of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 6.4% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 28.7% for shelter programs.

During the year 2005, 58.0% of pantries, 76.2% of kitchens, and 80.1% of shelters never experienced the need to stretch food resources (reduce meal portions or reduce the quantity of food in food packages).

- Nevertheless, 5.7% of the pantries, 4.8% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters indicated that they sometimes or always had to stretch food resources.



### 12.3 PROGRAMS THAT TURNED AWAY CLIENTS

Agencies were asked whether clients had been turned away within the past year and, if so, how many and for what reasons. Agencies were asked to use either their records or their best estimates to supply this information. Tables 12.3.1 and 12.3.2 show the results.

TABLE 12.3.1  
PROGRAMS THAT TURNED AWAY CLIENTS

	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Did the program turn away clients during the past year? <sup>a</sup>			
Yes	27.2%	15.0%	40.3%
No	72.8%	85.0%	59.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>
Average number of clients turned away in the past year among those that turned away at least one client	53	35	15
Median number of clients turned away in the past year among those that turned away at least one client	10	35	15
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Programs providing a valid number of clients who were turned away</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
Reasons for turning away clients <sup>b</sup>			
Lack of food resources	27.1%	33.5%	0.0%
Services needed not provided by the program	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients were ineligible or could not prove eligibility	29.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients abused program/came too often	35.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients exhibited drug, alcohol, or behavior problem	10.4%	66.5%	33.3%
Clients lived outside service area	70.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients had no proper identification	31.2%	0.0%	33.3%
Client's income exceeded the guidelines	6.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	4.2%	33.5%	66.7%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Programs that turned away clients</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 9, 10, and 12 of the agency survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For programs that turned away clients, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 6.4% for pantry programs, 16.7% for kitchen programs, and 28.7% for shelter programs.

TABLE 12.3.1 (*continued*)

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For reasons for turning away clients, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 0.0% for pantry programs, 0.0% for kitchen programs, and 25.0% for shelter programs.

<sup>a</sup>For pantries, responses greater than 3,000 clients turned away were recoded as 3,000 clients. For kitchens and shelters, responses greater than 2,500 clients turned away were recoded as 2,500 clients.

<sup>b</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

As Table 12.3.1 shows, 27.2% of the pantries, 15.0% of the kitchens, and 40.3% of the shelters responded that they turned away clients during the past year. Reasons for turning away clients follow:

- Among programs turning away clients, 27.1% of the pantries, 33.5% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters turned away clients at least once due to lack of food resources.
- Among programs turning away clients, 25.0% of the pantries, 0.0% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters turned away clients at least once because the services needed were not provided by the program.
- Among programs turning away clients, 29.2% of the pantries, 0.0% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters turned away clients at least once because the clients were ineligible or could not prove eligibility.
- Among programs turning away clients, 35.4% of the pantries, 0.0% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters turned away clients at least once because the clients abused the program or because they came too often.

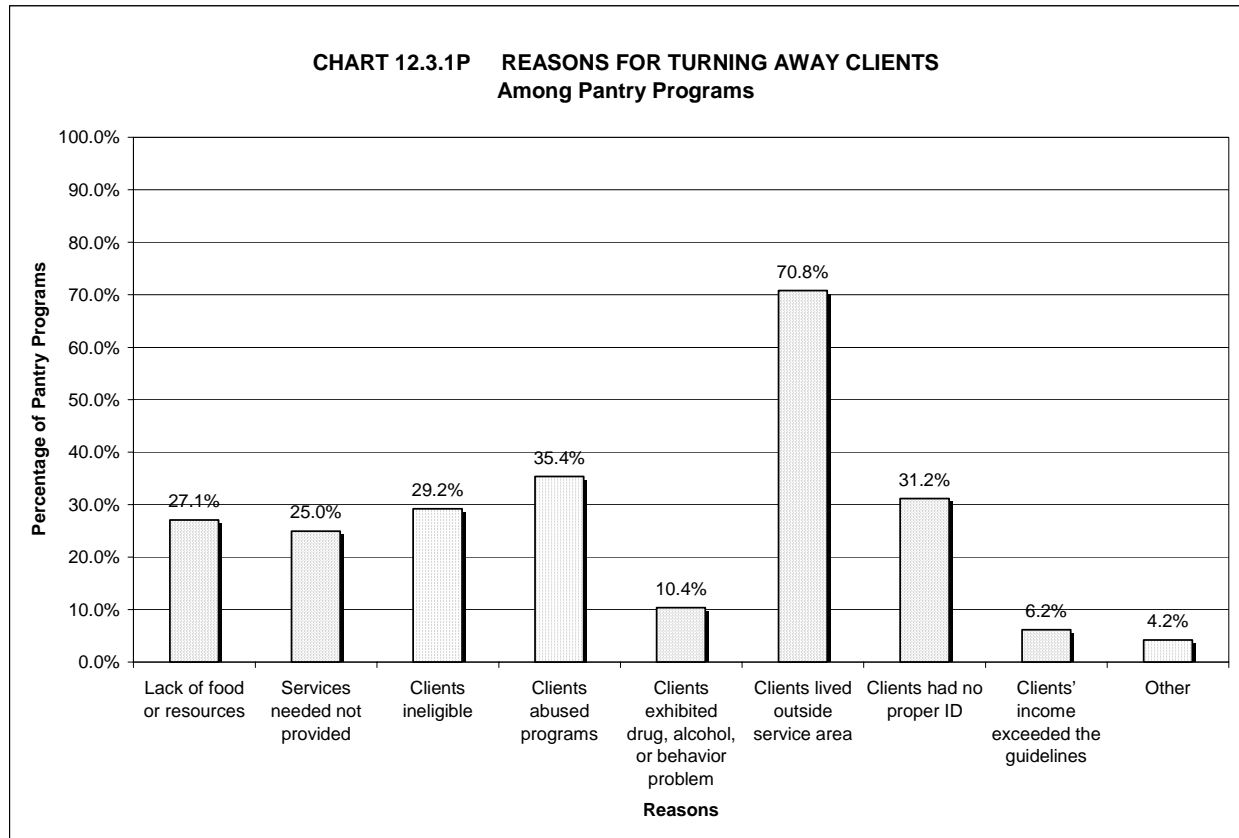




TABLE 12.3.2

## MOST FREQUENT REASONS THE PROGRAM TURNED AWAY CLIENTS

	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
<b>Most frequent reason</b>			
Lack of food or resources	20.0%	33.5%	0.0%
Services needed not provided by the program	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients were ineligible or could not prove eligibility	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients abused program/came too often	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients exhibited drug, alcohol, or behavior problem	4.4%	66.5%	33.3%
Clients lived outside service area	46.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients had no proper identification	8.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Client's income exceeded the guidelines	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	2.2%	0.0%	66.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Second most frequent reason</b>			
Lack of food or resources	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Services needed not provided by the program	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients were ineligible or could not prove eligibility	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients abused program/came too often	11.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients exhibited drug, alcohol, or behavior problem	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients lived outside service area	22.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Clients had no proper identification	22.8%	0.0%	33.3%
Client's income exceeded the guidelines	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0%	100.0%	66.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Programs that turned away clients</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 11 of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For most frequent reason, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 6.2% for pantry programs, 0.0% for kitchen programs, and 25.0% for shelter programs.

For second most frequent reason, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 27.1% for pantry programs, 66.5% for kitchen programs, and 25.0% for shelter programs.

## 12.4 ADDITIONAL FOOD RESOURCES NEEDED PER WEEK

Agencies were asked how much additional food is needed during a typical week to adequately meet the demand for food. Results are summarized in Table 12.4.1.

TABLE 12.4.1

ADDITIONAL FOOD RESOURCES NEEDED PER WEEK

	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
No additional meals or meal equivalents needed <sup>a</sup>	67.3%	65.1%	90.1%
1 to 10 additional meals or meal equivalents needed	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
11 to 49 additional meals or meal equivalents needed	0.6%	5.0%	0.0%
50 to 149 additional meals or meal equivalents needed	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
150 or more additional meals or meal equivalents needed	28.3%	30.0%	9.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>
Average number of additional meal equivalents needed among valid answers <sup>b</sup>	491	224	175
Median number of additional meal equivalents needed among valid answers <sup>b</sup>	385	200	175
Average amount of additional food needed (pounds) <sup>b</sup>	638	291	228
Median amount of additional food needed (pounds) <sup>b</sup>	500	260	228
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N) – Programs that need more food resources</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 14 of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 17.0% for pantry programs, 16.7% for kitchen programs, and 28.7% for shelter programs.

<sup>a</sup>This variable was constructed from two variables, one asking food poundage and the other number of meals. Poundage was converted to meals by dividing the poundage by 1.3. Then, the resulting number of meals and the other variable of actual number of meals were summed to produce the number of meals reported here. The 1.3 pounds per meal factor is based on tabulations from U.S. Department of Agriculture: "Food Consumption and Dietary Levels of Households in the United States, 1987-88." Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994.

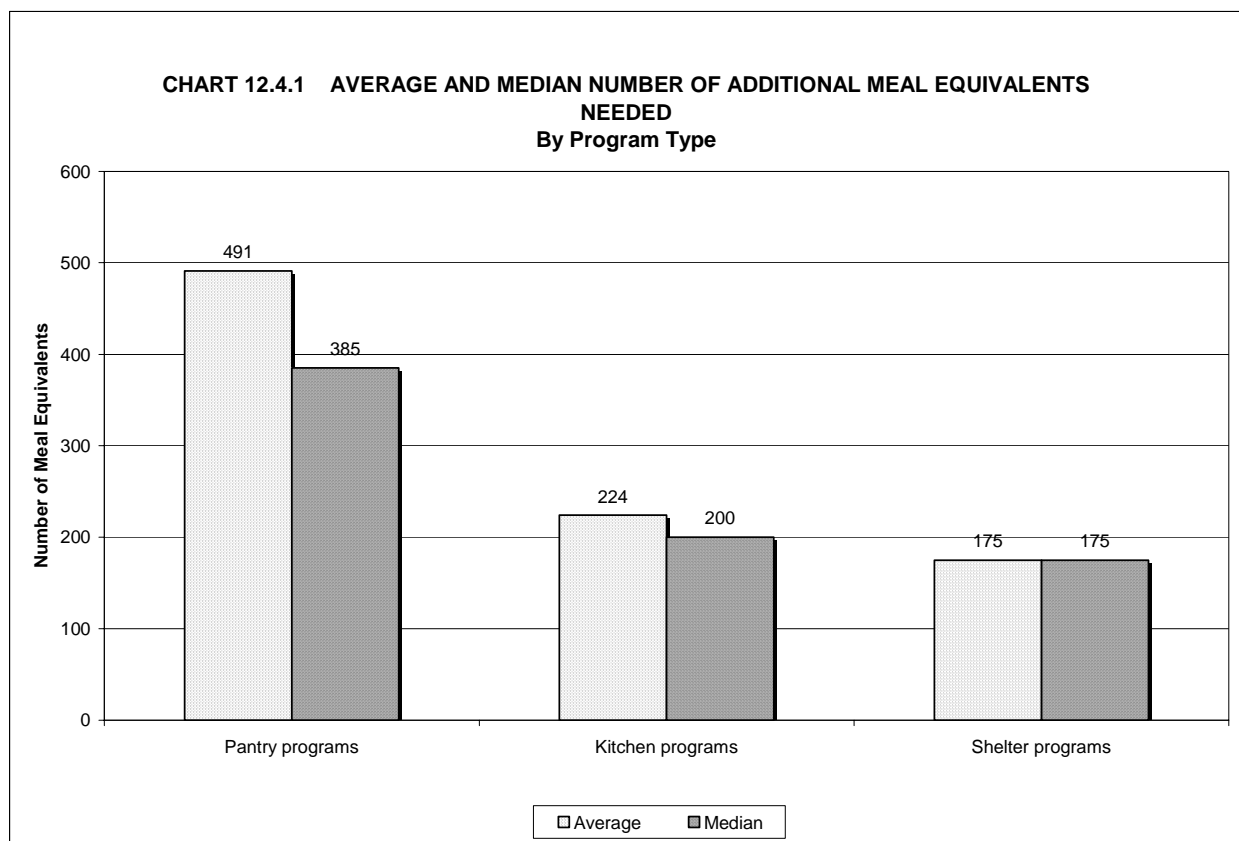
<sup>b</sup>Zeros as responses were not included as valid responses for calculating the average and the median. For pantries, responses greater than 2,500 lb. (1,923 meals) were recoded as 2,500 lb. (1,923 meals). For kitchens, responses

TABLE 12.4.1 (*continued*)

greater than 1,690 lb. (1,300 meals) were recoded as 1,690 lb. (1,300 meals). For shelters, responses greater than 2,080 lb. (1,600 meals) were recoded as 2,080 lb. (1,600 meals).

The percentage of programs that answered that they did not need additional food for distribution is 67.3% for pantries, 65.1% for kitchens, and 90.1% for shelters. Results among the programs in need of additional food follow:

- The median pantry needed more than 500 additional pounds of food per week.
- The median kitchen needed more than 200 additional meal equivalents per week.
- The median shelters needed more than 175 additional meal equivalents per week.





### 13. AGENCIES AND FOOD PROGRAMS: RESOURCES

Substantial resources are required to operate emergency food programs effectively, including food, staffing, and physical space. This chapter reports the types and sources of the resources used by providers of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. We begin by examining the sources of food reported by the providers. The use of paid and unpaid staff is then examined, with a focus on the great importance of volunteers to the system.

#### 13.1 SOURCES OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED BY PROGRAMS

The survey asked how much of the food distributed through the emergency food programs comes from food banks, versus other sources. In particular, agencies were asked to state the percentage of food received from each of the sources shown in Table 13.1.1.

TABLE 13.1.1  
SOURCES OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED BY PROGRAMS

Sources of Food	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Average percentage of food received from food bank(s)	92.1%	61.3%	59.5%
Percentage of programs receiving food from <sup>a</sup> :			
TEFAP or CSFP	90.9%	81.0%	81.8%
Church or religious congregations	55.1%	29.3%	45.4%
Local merchant or farmer donations	22.4%	47.1%	45.4%
Local food drives (e.g., Boy Scouts)	26.1%	17.6%	27.2%
Food purchased by agency	24.4%	76.3%	81.8%
Other <sup>b</sup>	20.5%	41.1%	27.2%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 8, 8a, and 8b of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

TABLE 13.1.1 (*continued*)

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For average percentage of food received from food bank, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 5.4% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 28.6% for shelter programs.

For percentage of programs that distribute government or USDA commodities (TEFAP or CSFP) received from food bank(s) or a state agency, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 12.3% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 21.5% for shelter programs.

For percentage of food from the other listed sources, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 43.2% for pantry programs, 29.2% for kitchen programs, and 21.5% for shelter programs.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>This includes individual donations, organization gardens, and donations from other volunteer or civic groups.

Food banks are a major source of food. 92.1% of the food the pantries distribute, 61.3% of the food the kitchens serve, and 59.5% of the food the shelters serve are provided by their food banks. Programs also receive food from other sources:

- 90.9% of pantries, 81.0% of kitchens, and 81.8% of shelters receive food from federal food or commodity programs, such as TEFAP or CSFP.
- 55.1% of pantries, 29.3% of kitchens, and 45.4% of shelters receive food from churches or religious congregations.
- 22.4% of pantries, 47.1% of kitchens, and 45.4% of shelters receive food from local merchants or farmer donations.
- 26.1% of pantries, 17.6% of kitchens, and 27.2% of shelters receive food from local food drives.

### 13.2 STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RESOURCES DURING PREVIOUS WEEK

Agencies were asked how many paid staff and volunteers they had and how many volunteer hours they had received during the previous week. Table 13.2.1 presents the results.

TABLE 13.2.1

#### STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RESOURCES DURING PREVIOUS WEEK

Staff and Volunteer Resources	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs	Other Programs
Number of paid staff <sup>a</sup>				
None	70.5%	19.0%	18.3%	n.a.
1	9.2%	9.5%	9.0%	n.a.
2	8.0%	9.5%	9.0%	n.a.
3	1.9%	23.8%	27.4%	n.a.
4	2.5%	9.6%	0.0%	n.a.
5	1.2%	4.8%	0.0%	n.a.
6-10	2.5%	4.8%	27.2%	n.a.
More than 10	4.3%	19.2%	9.0%	n.a.
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	n.a.
Average number of paid staff among valid responses	2	5	4	n.a.
Median number of paid staff among valid responses	0	3	3	n.a.
Number of volunteers <sup>b</sup>				
None	8.0%	4.8%	30.2%	15.7%
1	4.0%	9.6%	0.0%	3.9%
2-3	14.2%	9.6%	9.9%	25.5%
4-6	24.4%	4.8%	30.1%	17.6%
7-10	24.4%	28.5%	9.9%	11.7%
11-20	15.9%	28.6%	9.9%	17.7%
21-50	7.4%	9.5%	9.9%	5.9%
More than 50	1.7%	4.7%	0.0%	2.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Average number of volunteers among valid responses	10	16	9	12
Median number of volunteers among valid responses	6	10	5	4
Number of volunteer hours <sup>c</sup>				
None	8.0%	4.8%	30.2%	15.7%
1-5	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.7%

TABLE 13.2.1 (*continued*)

Staff and Volunteer Resources	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs	Other Programs
6-10	11.9%	9.5%	0.0%	9.8%
11-25	24.4%	19.0%	20.0%	19.6%
26-50	18.2%	19.0%	0.0%	17.7%
51-100	12.4%	23.8%	19.9%	10.0%
More than 100	12.5%	23.8%	29.9%	15.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Average number of volunteer hours among valid responses (hours)	52	104	114	12
Median number of volunteer hours among valid responses (hours)	52	104	114	4
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>224</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 15, 16, and 27 of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

For number of paid staff, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 13.3% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 21.5% for shelter programs.

For number of volunteers, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 6.4% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, 28.7% for shelter programs, and 77.3% for other programs.

For number of volunteer hours, missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 6.4% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, 28.7% for shelter programs, and 77.3% for other programs.

<sup>a</sup>For pantries and kitchens, responses greater than 50 paid staff members were recoded as 50 paid staff members. For shelters, responses greater than 75 paid staff members were recoded as 75 paid staff members.

<sup>b</sup>For pantries, kitchens, and shelters, responses greater than 200 volunteers were recoded as 200 volunteers. For other programs, responses greater than 3,500 volunteers were recoded as 3,500 volunteers.

<sup>c</sup>For pantries, kitchens, and shelters, responses greater than 1,000 volunteer hours were recoded as 1,000 volunteer hours. For other programs, responses greater than 7,000 volunteer hours were recoded as 7,000 volunteer hours.

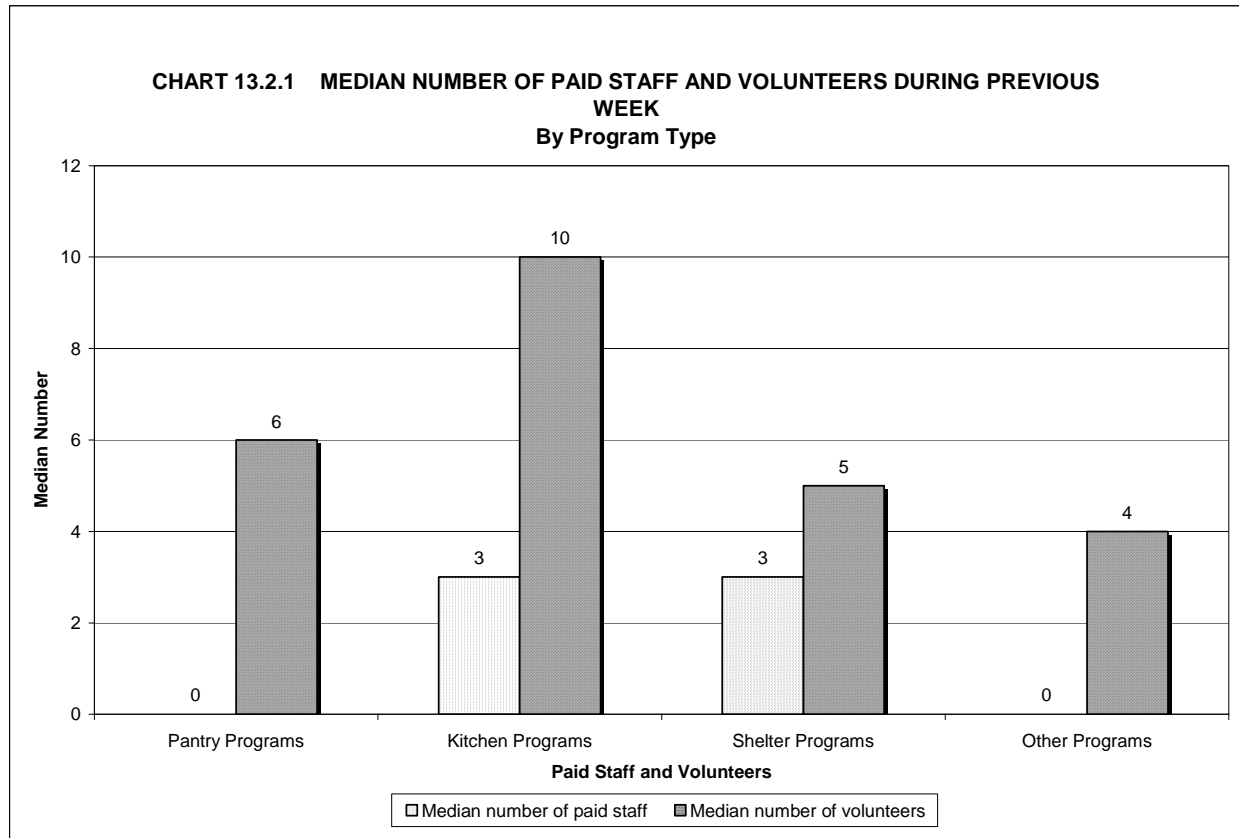
As Table 13.2.1 shows, 70.5% of the pantries, 19.0% of the kitchens, and 18.3% of the shelters had no paid staff in their workforce during the week prior to this study. The median number of paid staff was 0 for the pantries, 3 for the kitchens, and 3 for the shelters. More results include:



- The median number of volunteers in a week was 6 for the pantries, 10 for the kitchens, and 5 for the shelters, and 4 for the other programs.
- The median number of volunteer hours during the previous week of this study was 52 for the pantries, 104 for the kitchens, and 114 for the shelters, and 4 for the other programs.
- 8.0% of the pantries, 4.8% of the kitchens, and 30.2% of the shelters, and 15.7% of the other programs had no volunteers in their workforce during the previous week of this study.
- The midpoint (\$7.90) of the current minimum wage (\$5.15) and the average hourly earning from service occupations (\$10.65) can be used to obtain a dollar value of volunteer hours.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. “National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States, 2004.” August 2005, Table 1, p. 3.



### 13.3 PRODUCTS PURCHASED FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN FOOD BANKS

Agencies were asked to indicate the categories of products that their programs purchased with cash from sources other than their food bank resources. Results based on agency responses are summarized in Table 13.3.1.

TABLE 13.3.1

#### PRODUCTS PURCHASED FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN FOOD BANK

Categories of Products Programs Purchased with Cash from Sources Other than the Agency's Food Bank <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Bread, cereal, rice, and pasta	6.4%	38.0%	44.2%
Fresh fruits and vegetables	7.6%	61.8%	66.6%
Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables	4.1%	33.3%	0.0%
Meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts	11.7%	47.4%	55.5%
Milk, yogurt, and cheese	7.0%	52.3%	66.6%
Fats, oils, condiments, and sweets	5.3%	33.2%	33.1%
Cleaning or personal hygiene products, diapers, and toilet paper	15.2%	33.2%	100.0%
Other <sup>b</sup>	4.7%	9.5%	0.0%
No outside purchases	71.9%	24.0%	0.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 23 of the agency survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 9.1% for pantry programs, 12.5% for kitchen programs, and 35.9% for shelter programs.

<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>This includes beverages, such as coffee, tea, and juice; paper products, such as plastic utensils, paper plates, and garbage bags; and laundry products.

As Table 13.3.1 shows, 71.9% of the pantries, 24.0% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters did not purchase products from sources other than their food banks. However, most

emergency food programs purchased products they needed from sources other than their food banks. More details follow:

- 6.4% of the pantries, 38.0% of the kitchens, and 44.2% of the shelters purchased bread, cereal, rice, and pasta.
- 7.6% of the pantries, 61.8% of the kitchens, and 66.6% of the shelters purchased fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 4.1% of the pantries, 33.3% of the kitchens, and 0.0% of the shelters purchased canned or frozen fruits and vegetables.
- 11.7% of the pantries, 47.4% of the kitchens, and 55.5% of the shelters purchased meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- 7.0% of the pantries, 52.3% of the kitchens, and 66.6% of the shelters purchased milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- 5.3% of the pantries, 33.2% of the kitchens, and 33.1% of the shelters purchased fats, oils, condiments, and sweets.
- 15.2% of the pantries, 33.2% of the kitchens, and 100.0% of the shelters purchased cleaning or personal hygiene products, diapers, and toilet paper.

## 14. AGENCIES AND FOOD PROGRAMS: IMPORTANCE OF FOOD BANKS

At the national level, food banks are by far the single largest source of food to A2H providers. This chapter examines the providers' relationship to the food banks in more detail. We first present tabulations of what products the providers would like to be able to obtain in greater quantity from their food banks. Subsequent sections explore the overall importance of the food banks to the operations of the providers and additional types of services the providers would like to obtain from the food banks.

### 14.1 PRODUCTS NEEDED FROM FOOD BANKS

Agencies were also asked to identify the categories of products they need more of from their food bank. Table 14.1.1 presents the findings.

TABLE 14.1.1  
PRODUCTS NEEDED FROM FOOD BANKS

Categories of Food and Nonfood Products Programs Need or Need More of from Their Food Bank <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Bread, cereal, rice, and pasta	19.7%	25.0%	37.3%
Fresh fruits and vegetables	33.0%	64.9%	87.4%
Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables	14.4%	40.0%	24.9%
Meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts	50.8%	64.8%	87.4%
Milk, yogurt, and cheese	37.0%	44.8%	87.4%
Fats, oils, condiments, and sweets	16.2%	19.9%	49.8%
Cleaning or personal hygiene products, diapers, and toilet paper	47.4%	15.0%	100.0%
Other <sup>b</sup>	6.9%	5.0%	12.4%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 24 of the agency survey.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

TABLE 14.1.1 (*continued*)

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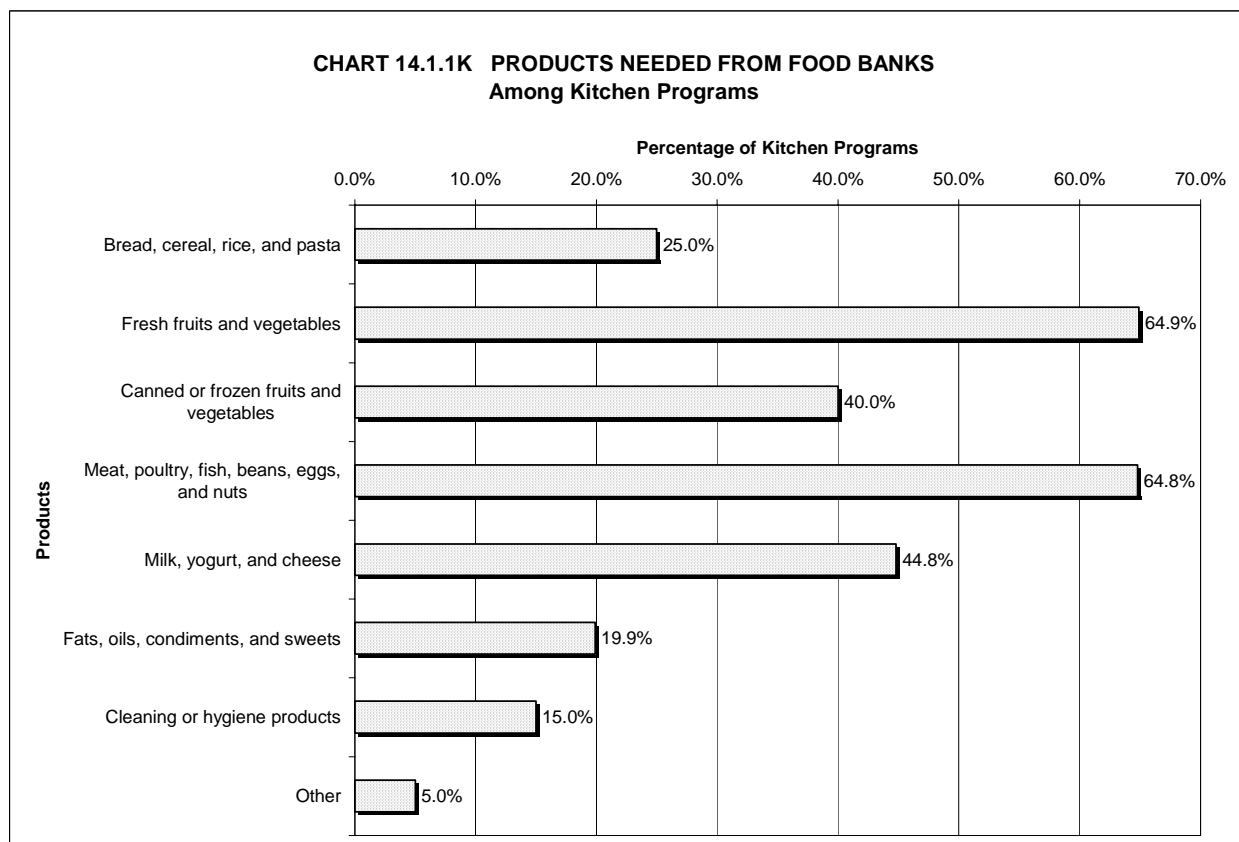
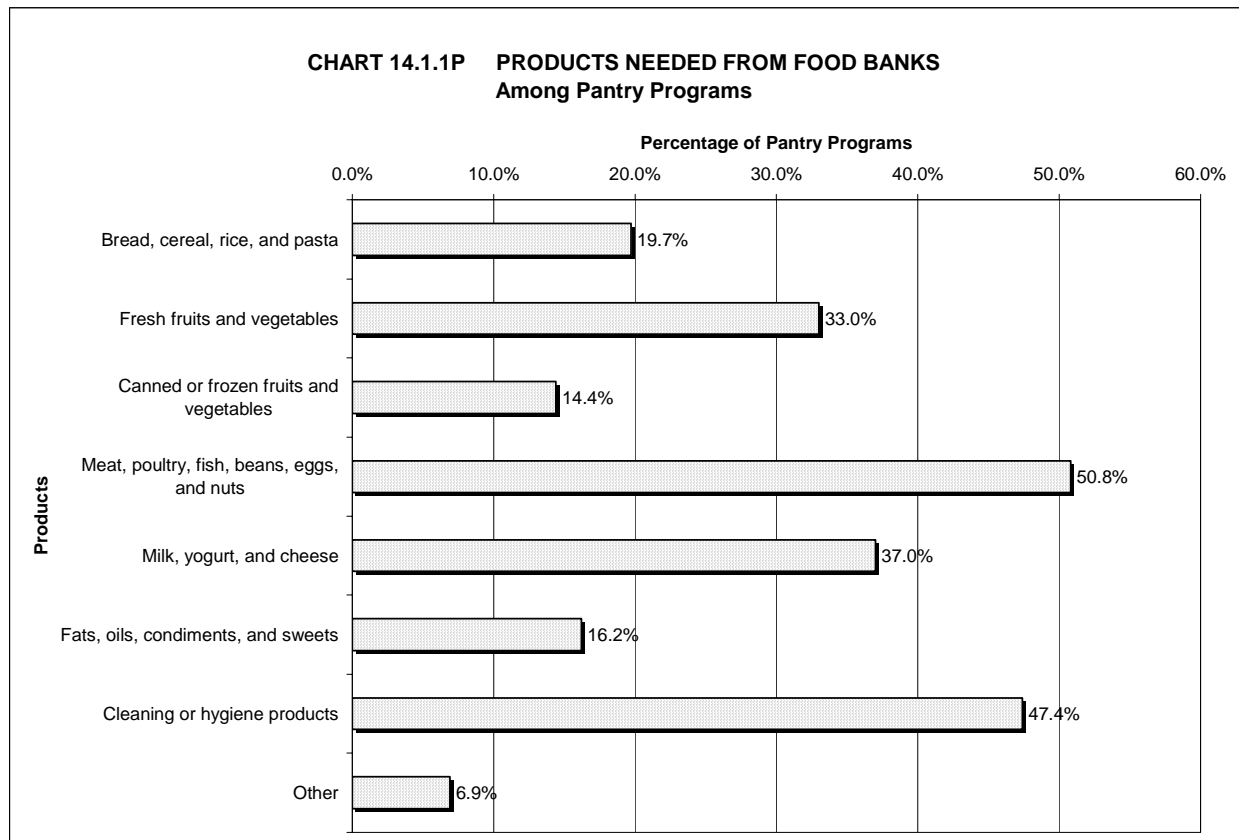
Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 8.0% for pantry programs, 16.7% for kitchen programs, and 43.0% for shelter programs.

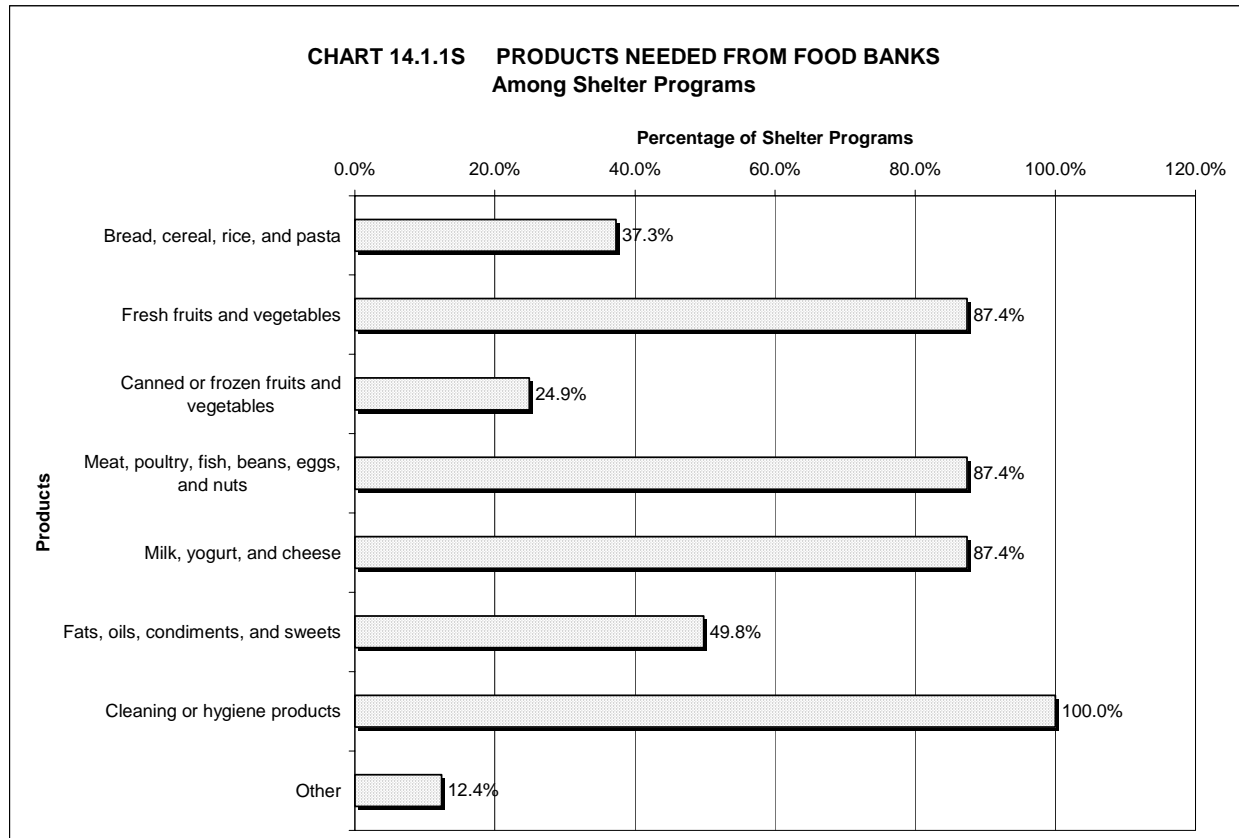
<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>This includes paper products, such as plastic utensils, paper plates, and garbage bags; beverages, such as juice, coffee, and tea; and dietary supplements, such as vitamins and Ensure.

As presented in Table 14.1.1, many agencies wish to receive more of certain products from their food banks. Specifics are as follows:

- 19.7% of the pantries, 25.0% of the kitchens, and 37.3% of the shelters need more bread, cereal, rice, and pasta.
- 33.0% of the pantries, 64.9% of the kitchens, and 87.4% of the shelters need more fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 14.4% of the pantries, 40.0% of the kitchens, and 24.9% of the shelters need more canned or frozen fruits and vegetables.
- 50.8% of the pantries, 64.8% of the kitchens, and 87.4% of the shelters need more meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- 37.0% of the pantries, 44.8% of the kitchens, and 87.4% of the shelters need more milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- 16.2% of the pantries, 19.9% of the kitchens, and 49.8% of the shelters need more fats, oils, condiments, and sweets.
- 47.4% of the pantries, 15.0% of the kitchens, and 100.0% of the shelters need more products in the category of cleaning or personal hygiene products, diapers, and toilet paper.







## 14.2 IMPACT OF ELIMINATION OF FOOD BANK

Agencies were asked how much of an impact the elimination of their food bank would have on their programs. Table 14.2.1 shows the results.

TABLE 14.2.1  
IMPACT OF ELIMINATION OF FOOD BANK

<i>If the Food Supply You (i.e., Agency) Receive from Your Food Bank Was Eliminated, How Much of an Impact Would This Have on Your Program?</i>	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
No impact at all	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Minimal impact	4.0%	13.6%	18.3%
Significant impact	23.2%	27.4%	27.3%
Devastating impact	68.3%	49.9%	54.4%
Unsure	4.5%	9.1%	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

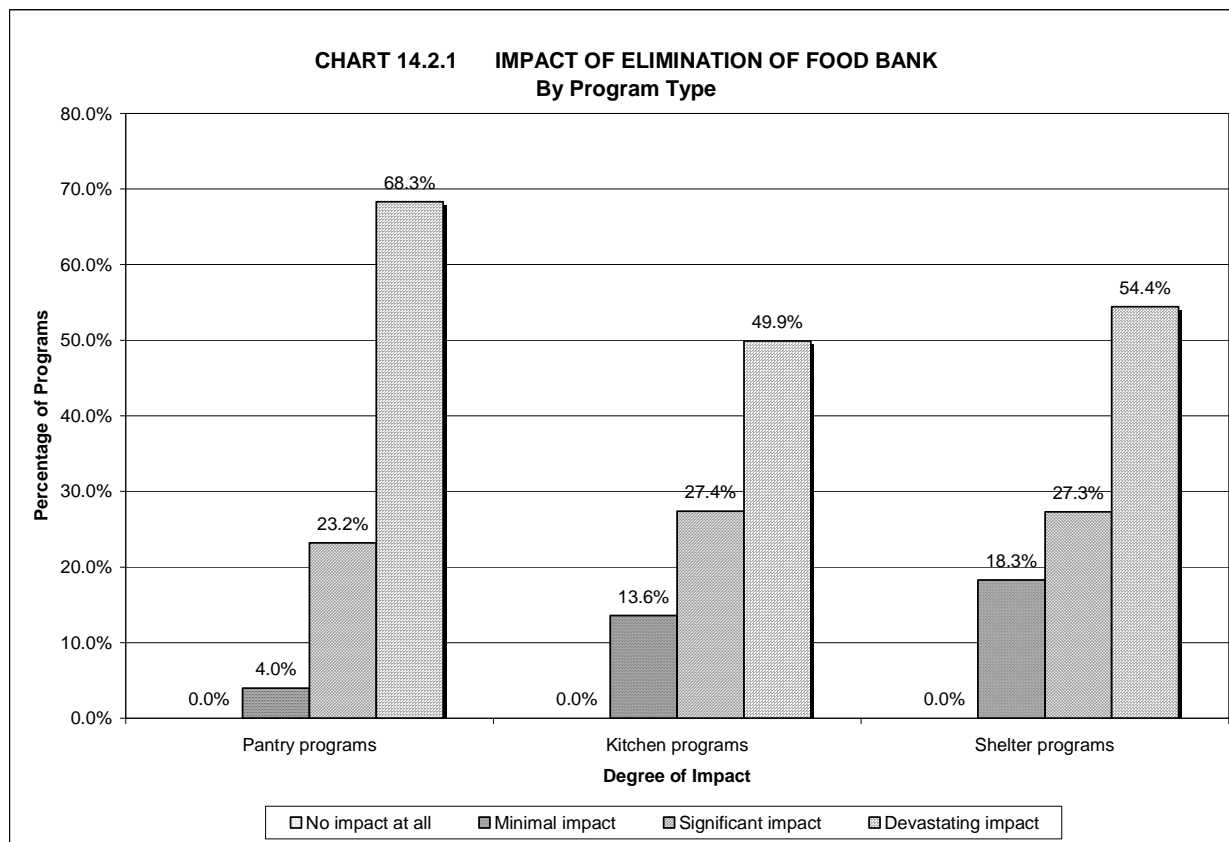
SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 25 of the agency survey.

NOTES: The percentages presented in this table are based only on usable responses, excluding missing, don't know, and refusal responses. All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Missing, don't know, and refusal responses combined are 5.9% for pantry programs, 8.3% for kitchen programs, and 21.5% for shelter programs.

91.5% of the pantries, 77.3% of the kitchens, and 81.7% of the shelters said that the elimination of support from their food banks would have a significant or devastating impact on their operation. Details include:

- 68.3% of the pantries, 49.9% of the kitchens, and 54.4% of the shelters believed that the elimination of the food bank would have a devastating impact on their programs.
- Another 23.2% of the pantries, 27.4% of the kitchens, and 27.3% of the shelters believed that the elimination of the food bank would have a significant impact on their programs.



### 14.3 AREAS OF ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE DESIRED

Agencies were asked what kinds of additional assistance, in addition to food, they need to meet their clients' needs. Findings are presented in Table 14.3.1.

TABLE 14.3.1  
AREAS OF ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE DESIRED

Programs That Need Additional Assistance in Any of the Following Areas <sup>a</sup>	Pantry Programs	Kitchen Programs	Shelter Programs
Nutrition education	34.0%	38.4%	45.3%
Training in food handling	23.6%	33.2%	39.8%
Accessing local resources	32.6%	33.2%	49.9%
Advocacy training	14.9%	18.1%	33.2%
Other <sup>b</sup>	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Question 26 of the agency survey.

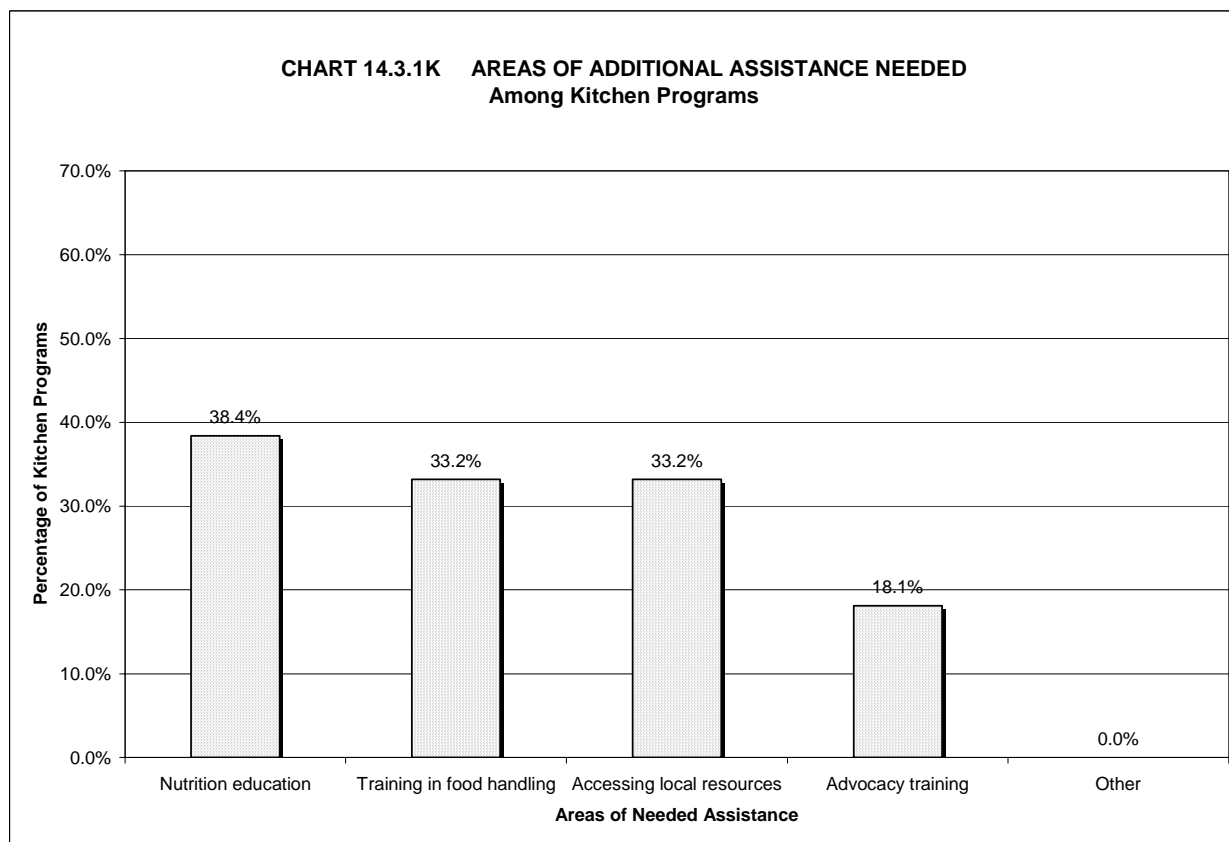
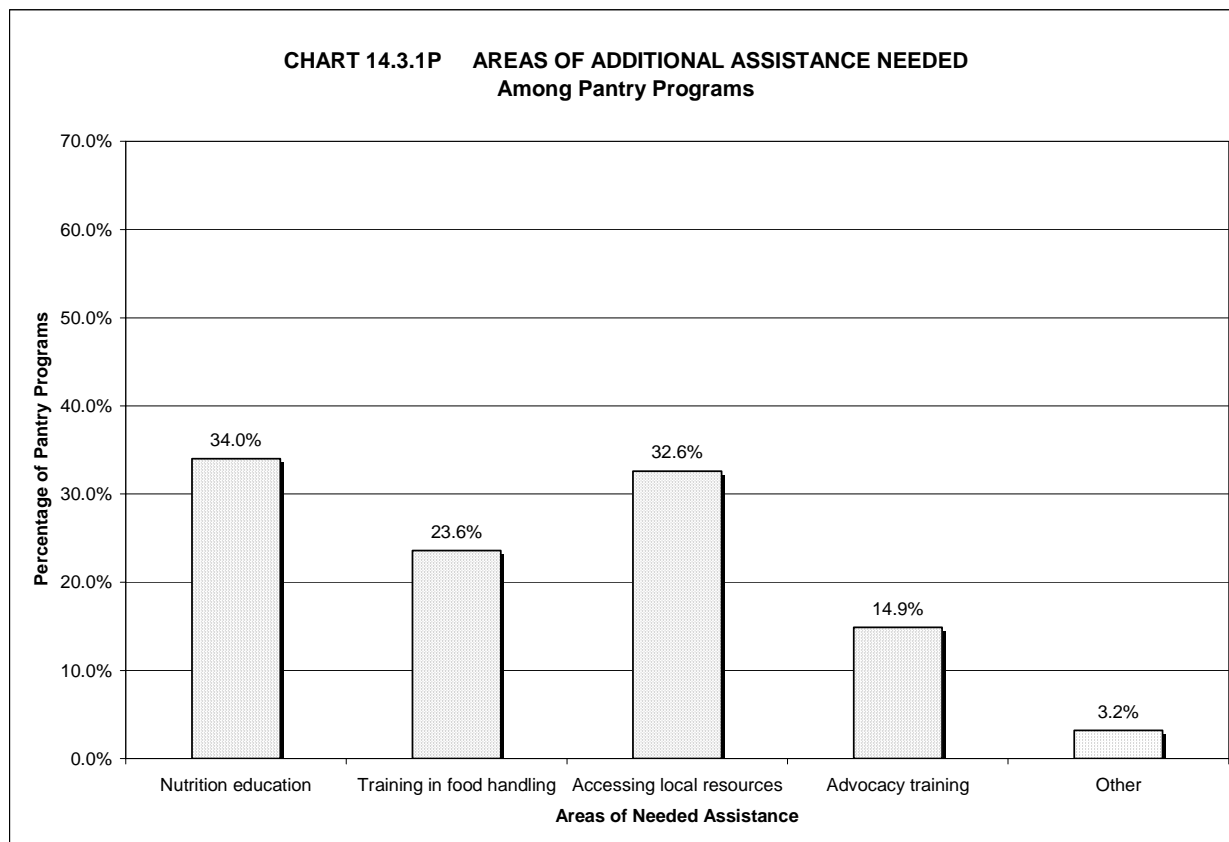
NOTE: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food programs of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

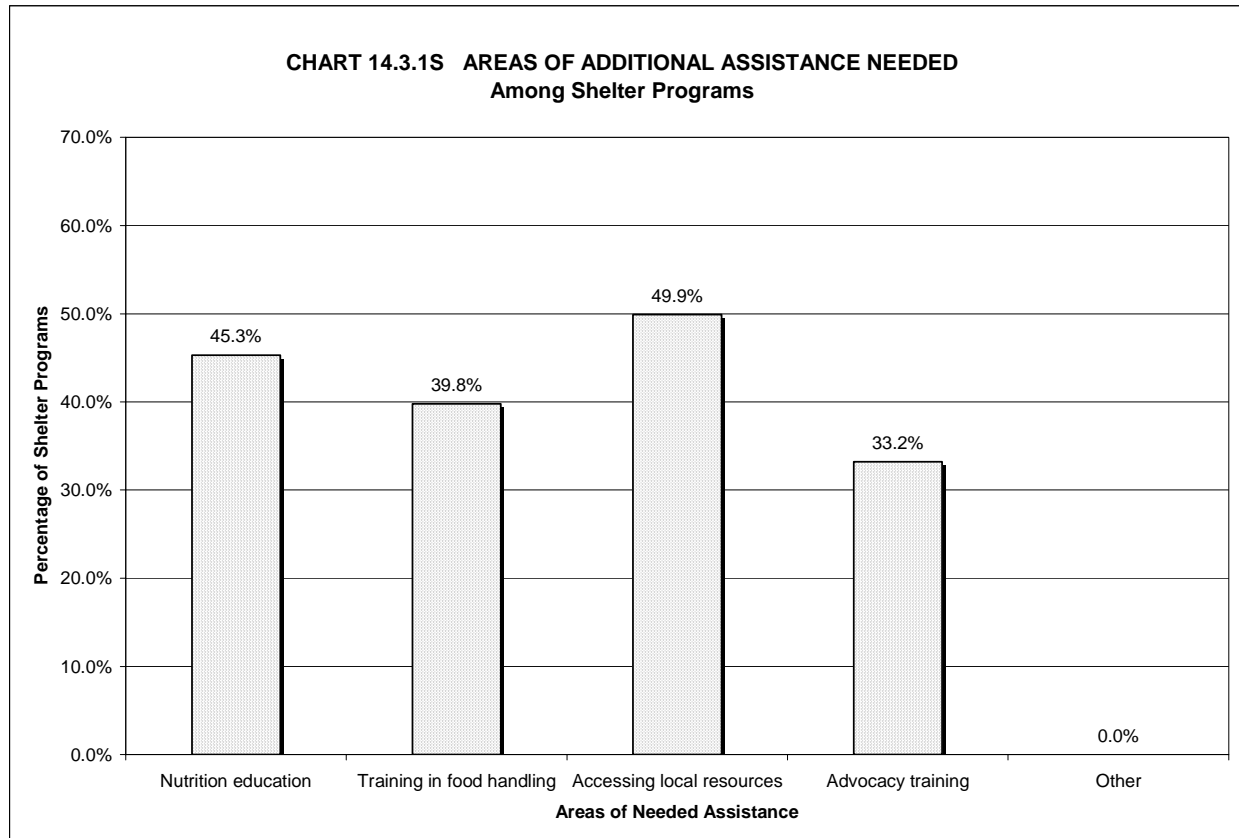
<sup>a</sup>Multiple responses were accepted.

<sup>b</sup>This includes funding and addiction programs.

Some programs wished to receive further assistance from their food banks in one or more of the areas specified in Table 14.3.1. Details include:

- 34.0% of the pantries, 38.4% of the kitchens, and 45.3% of the shelters said that they needed additional assistance in nutrition education.
- 23.6% of the pantries, 33.2% of the kitchens, and 39.8% of the shelters said that they needed additional assistance in training in food handling.
- 32.6% of the pantries, 33.2% of the kitchens, and 49.9% of the shelters said that they needed additional assistance in accessing local resources.
- 14.9% of the pantries, 18.1% of the kitchens, and 33.2% of the shelters said that they needed additional assistance in advocacy training.







## **APPENDIX A**

### **PRECISION OF REPORTED ESTIMATES: SURVEY ERROR AND SAMPLING ERROR**





Food banks should be aware that many of the estimates in the report are based on relatively small sample sizes and are subject to survey error, which includes statistical sampling error and error from the operational components of the survey (non-sampling error), such as nonresponse, reporting error and measurement error. While the sampling design and sample sizes can impose some control on the sampling error (and while this error can be quantified), the non-sampling error reflects the degree of success in designing the questionnaire and data collection procedures and in conducting the data collection activities at all stages. Unfortunately, the non-sampling error cannot be quantified. The exact amount of variation (both sampling error and non-sampling error) will be different for different food banks, and the relative contribution of sampling error and non-sampling error to the total survey error will also vary by food bank.

In general, food banks should be aware that, at a minimum, most of the percentages in the report are measured with sampling variation in the range of 8 to 12 percentage points<sup>23</sup>. For instance, if food stamp participation rates among households served by a food bank are estimated to be—say—32%, it is very likely that the margin of error at a minimum extends from 24% to 40% around the 32% estimate. Furthermore, in many instances this margin of error could be 12 percentage points or more, especially for subgroups with small sample sizes.

For estimates of annual numbers of clients, for most food banks the margin of error tends to be in the range of about 30% of the estimates. For instance if a food bank's providers are estimated to serve—say—100,000 different clients annually, the margin of error around this

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<sup>23</sup> Sampling variation is measured in these reports in terms of the 90% confidence interval around an estimate. The 90% confidence interval implies that, with 90% confidence, the true value of an estimate will be in the interval. These confidence intervals, however, do not account for the non-sampling error, which can increase (sometimes substantially) the size of the confidence interval.

estimate would extent from about 70,000 to 130,000. In general, sampling error can depend on such factors as:

- Overall number of clients interviewed
- The number of different providers of each type at which clients were interviewed
- The specific variable(s) being considered

The ranges of precision highlighted above focus only on sampling variation due to statistical sampling and the number of completed interviews. As noted previously, other forms of survey error (the non-sampling error) will increase overall survey error. These other forms of error include:

- **Nonresponse.** When completed interviews is obtained from only a portion of the clients selected for the survey
- **Response Error.** When the client interviewed does not provide an accurate answer to a question because the client either misunderstands the question or chooses not to provide an accurate answer
- **Reporting Error.** When counts or other information used in the sampling and other data collection activities are in error or missing
- **Measurement Error.** When the question in the questionnaire is not worded effectively to obtain the desired information from the client

These forms of error exist in all surveys, but the size of the non-sampling error (relative to the sampling error) depends on the design of the data collection activities and implementation of these by all persons involved in the survey.

## **SAMPLING ERROR UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES**

The food bank reports contain a wealth of information and an extensive number of estimates based on the survey data. While in general it is desirable and useful to provide detailed information on the sampling variation for all variables for each specific food bank and in the multiple food bank-level reports, this is not feasible and would potentially detract from the

usefulness of the reports. To provide a useful measure of the extent of sampling error in the estimates, we have computed estimates of the statistical variation for selected variables to identify the general range of sampling variation<sup>24</sup>. Based on those calculations, we provide below some general guidelines that can be useful in helping food banks assess how much statistical variation is present in their estimates. The guidelines follow.<sup>25</sup>

### **Guidelines for Estimated Percentages for All Clients or Only Pantry Clients**

The largest sample sizes at the food bank level are for the overall client sample and for the subsample of pantry users. Following are guidelines for sampling variation for these groups:

**Guideline 1.** If you are considering a percentage estimate in the range of 30% to 70% and if the estimate is based on between 300 and 500 observations, then the margin of error is likely to be plus-or-minus about 8 percentage points.

**Example 1.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank estimates the percentage of pantry households that include at least one working member as 30%. Also, suppose the sample size for pantry clients at that food bank is 330. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 22% and 38%.

**Guideline 2.** If you are considering a percentage estimate below 30% or above 70%, and if the estimate is based on between 300 and 500 observations, then the margin of error is likely to be plus-or-minus about 5 percentage points. (This is like Guideline 1 but with a different percentage range.)

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<sup>24</sup> As noted before, the measures of sampling variation do not account for non-sampling error.

<sup>25</sup> Estimates of the sampling variation are based on estimates computed using data analysis software design for complex surveys (SUDAAN) to estimate standard errors for selected estimates for each individual participating food banks. The estimates in this appendix reflect average standard errors across food banks. The calculations take into account clustering, differential sampling rates, and other aspects of the sampling design. The confidence intervals reported in the text are 90% confidence intervals.

**Example 2.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank estimates the percentage of all households that include at least one member who is 65 years old or older. Suppose the estimate is 10%, and suppose the sample size for pantry clients at that food bank is 316. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 5% and 15%.

**Guideline 3.** If you are considering a percentage estimate in the range of 30% to 70% and if the estimate is based on 100 to 300 observations, then the margin of error is plus-or-minus about 9 percentage points. (This is like Guideline 1 but with a different sample size.)

**Example 3.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank estimates the percentage of pantry households that are food insecure to be 60%, and suppose the sample size for pantry clients at that food bank is 122. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 51% and 69%.

**Guideline 4.** If you are considering a percentage estimate below 30% or above 70%, and if the estimate is based on about 100 to 300 observations, then the margin of error is likely to be about plus-or-minus about 6 percentage points. (This is like Guideline 2 but with a different sample size.)

**Example 4.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank has an estimate of 15% for the percentage of all households that include at least one member who is 65 years old or older. Suppose too that the sample size for pantry clients at that food bank is 220. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 9% and 21%.

### **Guidelines for Estimated Percentages for Clients at Kitchens or Shelters**

The numbers of completed interviews at kitchens and shelters tend to be smaller and the estimates from these providers also inherently have greater statistical variation because of the frequency of operation. Following are guidelines for sampling variation for these groups:

#### **For Kitchens**

**Guideline 5.** If you are considering a percentage estimate for kitchens in the range of 30% to 70% and if the estimate is based on between 30 and 50 observations, then the margin of error is approximately plus-or-minus about 18 percentage points.

**Example 5.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank include an estimate that 40% of the kitchen households include at least one working member. Also, suppose the sample size for kitchen clients at that food bank is 45. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 27% and 63%.

**Guideline 6.** If you are considering a percentage estimate for kitchens that is below 30% or above 70%, and if the estimate is based on between 30 and 50 observations, then the margin of error is plus-or-minus about 10 percentage points. (This is like Guideline 5 but with a different percentage range.)

**Example 6.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank includes an estimate of the percentage of all households that include at least one member who is 65 years old or older. Suppose the estimate is 20%, and suppose the sample size for kitchen clients at that food bank is 43. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 10% and 30%.

**Guideline 7.** If you are considering a percentage estimate for kitchen clients in the range of 30% to 70% and if the estimate is based on more than 50 observations, then the margin of error is plus-or-minus about 16 percentage points. (This is like Guideline 5 but with a different sample size.)

**Example 7.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank estimates the percentage of kitchen households that are food insecure to be 60%, and suppose the sample size for kitchen clients at that food bank is 87. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 44% and 76%.

**Guideline 8.** If you are considering a percentage estimate for kitchen clients that is below 30% or above 70%, and if the estimate is based on more than 50 completed interviews, then the margin of error is plus-or-minus about 10 percentage points. (This is like Guideline 6 but with a different sample size.)

**Example 8.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank has an estimate of 22% for all kitchen households include at least one member who is 65 years old or older. Suppose too that the sample size for kitchen clients at that food bank is 58. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 12% and 32%.

**For Shelters**

**Guideline 9.** If you are considering a percentage estimate for a shelter in the range of 30% to 70% and if the estimate is based on more than 30 completed interviews, then the margin of error is plus-or-minus about 19 percentage points.

**Example 9.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank estimates the percentage of shelter households which food insecure as 65%. Also, suppose the sample size for shelter clients at that food bank is 45. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 46% and 84%.

**Guideline 10.** If you are considering a percentage estimate for shelters that is below 30% or above 70%, and if the estimate is based on more than 30 observations, then the margin of error is plus-or-minus about 11 percentage points. (This is like Guideline 9 but with a different percentage range.)

**Example 10.** Suppose that the report for a specific food bank, there is the estimate of the percentage of shelter households that include at least one working member. Suppose the estimate is 20%, and suppose the sample size for shelter clients at that food bank is 43. Then we can be 90% confident that the true value lies between 9% and 31%.

**Guidelines for Estimates of Numbers of Annual Clients**

The food bank reports also include estimates of the numbers of *different* clients served by the food banks in a year. For the typical food bank with about 400 overall client observations, the margin of error is approximately plus-or-minus 31% of the estimate. For instance, if a food bank is estimated to have approximately 20,000 different clients annually, then the statistical margin of error extends between approximately 13,800 and 26,200 clients.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**





**FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**Source: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant\\_recipients/resources.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/resources.htm)

For 2005, the following food stamp eligibility rules applied to households in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

**A. RESOURCES (RULES ON RESOURCE LIMITS)**

Households may have \$2,000 in countable resources, such as a bank account, or \$3,000 in countable resources if at least one person is age 60 or older or is disabled. However, certain resources are *not* counted, such as a home and lot, the resources of people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the resources of people who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (formerly AFDC), and most retirement (pension) plans.

A licensed vehicle is *not* counted if:

- It is used for income-producing purposes
- It is annually producing income consistent with its fair market value
- It is needed for long distance travel for work (other than daily commute)
- It is used as the home
- It is needed to transport a physically disabled household member
- It is needed to carry most of the household's fuel or water
- The household has little equity in the vehicle (because of money owed on the vehicle, it would bring no more than \$1,500 if sold)

For the following licensed vehicles, the fair market value over \$4,650 is counted:

- One per adult household member
- Any other vehicle a household member under 18 drives to work, school, job training, or to look for work

For all other vehicles, the fair market value over \$4,650 or the equity value, whichever is more, is counted as a resource.

## **B. INCOME (RULES ON INCOME LIMITS)**

Households must meet income tests *unless* all members are receiving Title IV (TANF), SSI, or, in some places, general assistance.

Most households must meet both the gross and net income tests, but a household with an elderly person or a person who is receiving certain types of disability payments only has to meet the net income test. Gross income means a household's total, nonexcluded income, before any deductions have been made. Net income means gross income minus allowable deductions.

Households, except those noted, that have income over the amounts listed below cannot get food stamps.

People in Household	Gross Monthly Income Limits	Net Monthly Income Limits
1	\$1,037	\$798
2	\$1,390	\$1,070
3	\$1,744	\$1,341
4	\$2,097	\$1,613
5	\$2,450	\$1,885
6	\$2,803	\$2,156
7	\$3,156	\$2,428
8	\$3,509	\$2,700
Each additional person	+\$354	+\$272

Note: Updated October 2005, effective through September 2006.

## **C. DEDUCTIONS (RULES ON ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME)**

Gross income means a household's total, nonexcluded income, before any deductions have been made. Net income means gross income minus allowable deductions.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> As of October 2005, effective through September 2006.

- A 20% deduction from earned income
- A standard deduction of \$134 for most households (higher for larger households, and in Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam)
- A dependent care deduction when needed for work, training, or education—but not more than \$200 for each child under age 2 and not more than \$175 for each other dependent
- Medical expenses for elderly or disabled members which are more than \$35 for the month if they are not paid by insurance or someone else
- Legally owed child support payments
- Excess shelter costs that are more than half the household's income after the other deductions. Allowable costs include the cost of fuel to heat and cook with, electricity, water, the basic fee for one telephone, rent or mortgage payments, and taxes on the home. The amount of the shelter deduction cannot be more than \$400 unless one person in the household is elderly or disabled. (The limit is higher in Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam.)

#### **D. WORK AND ALIENS (RULES ON WORK, AND LEGAL IMMIGRANTS)**

With some exceptions, able-bodied adults between 16 and 60 must register for work, accept suitable employment, and take part in an employment and training program to which they are referred by the food stamp office. Failure to comply with these requirements can result in disqualification from the program. In addition, able-bodied adults between 18 and 50 who do not have any dependent children can get food stamps for only 3 months in a 36-month period if they do not work or participate in a workfare or employment and training program other than job search. This requirement is waived in some locations.

#### **E. IMMIGRANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

The 2002 Farm bill restores food stamp eligibility to most legal immigrants that:

- Have lived in the country five years
- Are receiving disability-related assistance or benefits, regardless of entry date
- Starting October 1, 2003, are children regardless of entry date

Certain non-citizens, such as those admitted for humanitarian reasons and those admitted for permanent residence, are also eligible for the program. Eligible household members can get food stamps even if there are other members of the household that are not eligible.

Non-citizens that are in the United States temporarily, such as students, are not eligible.

A number of states have their own programs to provide benefits to immigrants who do not meet the regular Food Stamp Program eligibility requirements.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SOURCES OF INFORMATION SHOWN IN THE CHARTS AND TABLES IN CHAPTERS 5 THROUGH 14**



Table	Client Question	Agency Question
5.1.1	Client data	
5.2.1	2. Sex 3. Age 4. Relationship 6. Employment 7. Are there any children age 0-5 years in household? 11. Are you Spanish, Latino, or of Hispanic descent or origin? 11a. Would that be Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, some other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino group? 12. What is your race?	
5.3.1	2. Sex 3. Age 5. Citizen	
5.3.2	2. Sex 3. Age 5. Citizen	
5.4.1	9. Are you married, living with someone as married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?	
5.5.1	10. What is the highest level of education you completed?	
5.6.1	11. Are you Spanish, Latino, or of Hispanic descent or origin? 11a. Would that be Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, some other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino group? 12. What is your race?	
5.7.1	3. Age 6. Employment	

Table	Client Question	Agency Question
5.7.2	6. Employment 12a. Is respondent working? 13. You mentioned that you are not working now. How long has it been since you worked? 14a. Is this job a managerial or professional job? 15. Are you participating in any gov't sponsored job training or work experience programs, such as Welfare to Work or the food stamp employment training program?	
5.8.1	Federal Poverty Level Table	
5.8.2.1	29. What was your total income last month before taxes? 29a. What was your household's total income for last month?	
5.8.3.1	29. What was your total income last month before taxes? 30. What was your household's main source of income last month?	
5.8.3.2	6. Employment 25. Did you get money in the <u>last month</u> from any of the following....? 29. What was your total income last month before taxes?	
5.8.4.1	29. What was your total income last month before taxes? 31. What was your household's total income before taxes and other deductions <u>last year</u> from all sources, including Social Security and other gov't programs?	
5.9.1.1	16. Please tell me the kind of place where you now live. 17. Do you own, rent, live free with someone else? 18. Were you late paying your last month's rent or mortgage? 81. Does your household receive Section 8 or Public Housing Assistance?	
5.9.2.1	19. Do you have access to a place to prepare a meal, a working telephone, and a car that runs?	



Table	Client Question	Agency Question
6.1.1	<p>42. “The food I/we bought just didn’t last, and I/we didn’t have money to get more.” (Often, sometimes, never true)</p> <p>43. “I/We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” (Often, sometimes, never true)</p> <p>44. In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?</p> <p>44a. How often did this happen?</p> <p>45. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money to buy food?</p> <p>46. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn’t eat because you couldn’t afford enough food?</p>	
6.1.2	<p>42. “The food I/we bought just didn’t last, and I/we didn’t have money to get more.” (Often, sometimes, never true)</p> <p>43. “I/We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” (Often, sometimes, never true)</p> <p>44. In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?</p> <p>44a. How often did this happen?</p> <p>45. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money to buy food?</p> <p>46. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn’t eat because you couldn’t afford enough food?</p>	
6.2.1	<p>42. “The food I/we bought just didn’t last, and I/we didn’t have money to get more.” (Often, sometimes, never true)</p> <p>43. “I/We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” (Often, sometimes, never true)</p>	

Table	Client Question	Agency Question
6.3.1	<p>44a. How often did this happen?</p> <p>45. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money to buy food?</p> <p>46. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because you couldn't afford enough food?</p> <p>47. In the last 12 months, did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?</p>	
6.4.1	<p>3. Age</p> <p>6b. How many of the other people in your household are children less than 18 years old?</p> <p>49. "My child was not eating enough because I/we just couldn't afford enough food." (Often, sometimes, never true)</p> <p>50. In the last 12 months, did your child ever skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?</p> <p>51. In the last 12 months, was your child ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?</p>	
6.5.1	<p>52. In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household every had to choose between: paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care; paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel; paying for food and paying for rent or mortgage?</p>	
7.1.1	<p>32. Have you ever applied for Food Stamps?</p> <p>33. Are you receiving Food Stamps now?</p> <p>34. Did you receive Food Stamps in the past 12 months?</p> <p>36. How long have you been receiving Food Stamps?</p> <p>37. How many weeks do your Food Stamps usually last?</p>	
7.2.1	<p>38. Why haven't you applied for the Food Stamp Program?</p>	
7.3.1	<p>35. Why don't you receive Food Stamps now?</p>	

Table	Client Question	Agency Question
7.4.1	7a. Do any of your younger-than-school-age children go to day care? 8. Does the government pay part of the cost of day care? 41. In which, if any, of the following programs do you currently participate?	
7.5.1	26. Did you receive general assistance, welfare, or TANF at any time in the <u>past two years</u> ? 27. Was that assistance ever stopped during the past two years? 28. Why was your assistance stopped?	
7.6.1	40. Where do you do <u>most</u> of your grocery shopping?	
8.1.1	20. Would you say your own health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor? 21. Is anyone in your household in poor health?	
8.2.1	22a-f. Do you have any of the following kinds of health insurance? 23. Do you have unpaid medical or hospital bills? 24. In the past 12 months, have you been refused medical care because you could not pay or because you had a Medicaid or Medical Assistance card?	
9.1.1	56. How many different food pantries gave you food in the past month? 57. How many different soup kitchens gave you meals in the past month?	
9.2.1	53. Please rate how satisfied you are with the food that you and others in your household receive here. 54. When you come here, how often are you treated with respect by the staff who distribute food?	
9.3.1	55. If this agency weren't here to help you with food, what would you do?	
10.1.1		Agency data
10.2.1		1. Record the total number of emergency shelters, pantries, kitchens, and other programs you currently operate.
10.3.1		1. Record the total number of emergency shelters, pantries, kitchens, and other programs you currently operate.

Table	Client Question	Agency Question
10.4.1		3b. In what year did each selected program open?
10.5.1		4. For each selected program, please indicate which of the following services, if any, are currently being provided.
10.5.2		4. For each selected program, please indicate which of the following services, if any, are currently being provided.
10.5.3		27. Does your agency operate any of the following types of facilities?
10.6.1		28. Type of agency.
10.7.1		18. Do the selected programs currently serve any of the following groups?
10.8.1		7. Compared to 3 years ago, that is, 2001, is this program providing food to more, fewer, same number of clients?
10.9.1		19. In which of the following ways does the client mix change during the year for any of the selected programs?
11.1.1		6. During a typical week, approximately how many meals are served and/or bags or boxes of food distributed by each of the selected programs? 6a. How much does a typical bag or box usually weigh?
11.2.1		6c. How many different persons or households did you serve on the last day you were open? And how many meals were served and/or bags or boxes of food distributed by each of the selected programs on that day?
12.1.1		17. Is the continued operation of the selected programs threatened by one or more serious problems?
12.2.1		13. During the past year, about how often did each of the selected programs have to reduce meal portions or reduce the quantity of food in food packages because of a lack of food?

Table	Client Question	Agency Question
12.3.1		<p>9. During the past year, did the selected programs turn away any clients for <u>any</u> reason?</p> <p>10. For which of the following reasons did each selected program turn clients away?</p> <p>12. During the past year, approximately how many clients did each selected program turn away?</p>
12.3.2		11. What were each selected program's two most frequent reasons for turning away clients?
12.4.1		14. In your opinion, during a <i>typical week</i> , how much <i>more</i> food, if any, does each of the selected programs need in order to adequately meet their demand for food? Your best estimate is fine.
13.1.1		<p>8. For each selected program, approximately what percent of the distributed food comes from the food bank?</p> <p>8a. Do the selected programs distribute government or USDA commodities?</p> <p>8b. Approximately what percent of the distributed food comes from other sources?</p>
13.2.1		<p>15. Currently, how many <u>paid</u> staff are employed by each of the selected programs?</p> <p>16. During the past week, how many volunteers assisted and the number of volunteer hours for each selected program.</p>
13.3.1		23. Please indicate for each selected program, which of the following categories of products are <u>purchased</u> with cash from sources other than your food bank?
14.1.1		24. What categories of food and non-food products do you <u>need</u> that you are not getting now, or need more of from your food bank to meet your clients' needs?
14.2.1		25. If the food supply you receive from your food bank were eliminated, how much of an impact would this have on your program?
14.3.1		26. Does your program need additional assistance in any of the following areas?